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WORK,

OR,

PLENTY TO DO AND HOW TO DO IT.

BY

MARGARET MARIA BREWSTER. Gordon.

FIFTEENTH THOUSAND.

EDINBURGH: THOMAS CONSTABLE & CO.

HAMILTON, ADAMS, & CO., LONDON.

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PREFACE TO FIRST EDITION.

THE words of preface which this homely little volume requires are but few. With no pretensions to originality, it professes merely to be a brief Manual of every-day hints to those who, commencing "Life in Earnest," and fully instructed in its principles, may yet feel their need of a few practical and plain-spoken words about the details of their work—words often left unspoken, because apparently so obvious. The Author is not without the hope, that her little work may prove of some service to those who, along with herself, may have experienced the needs and lamented the failures, to which she has sought to direct attention.

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PREFACE TO SECOND EDITION.

A Second Edition having been thus early called for, the Author begs to acknowledge with gratitude the kind reception which her little volume has met with, and to state,—for the purpose of removing a misapprehension of which she has been informed,—that comparatively but a small portion of this work has appeared in another form.

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WORK.

I.

INTRODUCTORY.

"Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might; for there is no work, nor device, nor knowledge, nor wisdom, in the grave whither thou goest."—Eccles. ix. 10.

"Man hath his daily work of body or mind
Appointed, which declares his dignity,
And the regard of Heaven on all his ways,
While other animals inactive range,
And of their doings God takes no account."

Paradise Lost.

Idleness has no place in the busy and beautiful creation of God; it enters not into His thoughts and ways; it is opposed to all that He has said, and to all that He has done. Work,—various it is true in kind and degree,—is one of the laws of the universe. In our own planet at this moment, multitudes of busy hands and busy heads are to be found in all directions. The merchant at the desk,—the labourer in the field,—the statesman in the cabinet,—the author in the study,—the red Indian in the hunting ground,—the gold digger in the mine,—and a great

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company whose work as a whole constitutes the very essence of social order. It is true that men have taken advantage of this to hold the scales of work with an uneven hand, and to mete an unjust measure. Hence the cry of the slave,—hence the "long hours" of the factory,—hence the mournful song of the seamstress.

This does not however interfere with the fact that work is an element of our being. It is not only a barter for food, and raiment, and gold, but it is intended and fitted to produce happiness;—while the unworking classes, sensible of the deficiency, are obliged to assume the semblance of work, and toil in their vocation of finding pleasure. Nor is this principle confined to our earth. We know not what passes within the starry mansions; but the planet in its revolution, the satellite in its perturbations, the comet in its eccentric path, are all working their appointed work; while light and heat, snow and vapours, and stormy winds, fulfil the word of their Creator.

While such is the universal law, its principle and practice have been so marred by the selfishness of man, that we must look to the Gospel for the remedy of the evil, and for those high and holy motives by which the true service of God ought to be characterized and sustained. We accordingly find that there is one great and peculiar privilege amongst many, which God accords to those who,

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being redeemed by the blood of Christ, occupy the twofold position of children and servants. He allows such to work *for Him.* Nor is this a mere nominal position. He condescends to call them to His help. He gives each a different "charge to keep," which if he neglects, God's glory will suffer loss. He gives each a field to cultivate, and if the furrows are thinly sown, where will be the summer harvest? In looking around, however, upon the Christian Church, it is startingly evident that there is more profession than practice, more words than deeds, more fair green leaves than ripe wholesome fruit. There are indeed many whose works the day alone will declare, for even their left hand knoweth not what the right hath done; and there is ever a staff of open zealous workers, a record of whose deeds is left behind,

"Like foot-prints on the sands of time."

Still there remains a large number of professing Christians who do not work, or at least do not work thoroughly and acceptably, from want of power, or opportunity, or understanding.

There are many who marvel at the idea of work being a *privilege,*—many whose whole felicity is comprised in the *dolce far niente* of their negative existence, or in the excitement of their pursuit after bright glancing butterflies. There are others who do not understand the privilege of work, though they are hard workers, harder than any others, for they

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work as if to complete the tale of bricks for an Egyptian task-master. Others there also are, and a vast proportion in the present practical age, who delight in work for its own sake; their whole lives are passed in meditating and in accomplishing work,—successful work,—useful work,—work to be honoured in all ages. There are yet others whose heads droop, and whose hands hang down; and who, when they hear that work is a privilege possessed by the children of God, are ready to fancy that such they cannot be, for alas! they are of no use in the world,—God has given them no work to do for Him. Now, to the first class we have nothing to say, unless to bid them learn wisdom from the bee and the bird, and the silent but ever-working monitors who dwell in the little peopled cities on every hill-side.—(Prov. vi. 6.) Neither do we speak to the second class, because they are not working *for God*,—they are emphatically working for *themselves*, and in the way most offensive to God, for they are trying to hew out a door of their own into heaven,—their works are "dead works," or "splendid sins," as St. Augustine said of such. Nor can we invite the third class to listen to us, for neither are they working for God, even though their work may often look like God's work,—they are working for fame, for occupation, for excitement, for philanthropy; they are working because they cannot help working,—because to be busy is a principle of their nature. But we turn to

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the fourth class, because we would fain say a few words to open their eyes to see, and their ears to hear something of all that their Master is doing, and speaking, and requiring from them.

Of course, we do not refer to those who turn away from work when it is before them, because they do not like it, and listlessly dream away their lives in imagining work that they would do if they had it,—work that would suit their natural temperaments, or in other words, their natural selfishness. No; but we speak to a class much more numerous than is generally supposed,—those who are ready and willing to work for God—more than willing—tremulously anxious to do something for Him who has done so much for them, but who, from nervous, easily discouraged temperaments, and a false understanding of the nature of work, oftentimes imagine that they have neither niche in the temple, nor place in the vineyard. Such Christians look with a feeling akin to envy upon those who are engaged in special and visible work,—in teaching the ignorant, clothing the naked, visiting the prisoner, ministering to the sick, winning souls to Jesus. Are you, dear friend, whom we now address, prevented from doing this by peculiar causes known only to yourself? It may be delicacy of health, difficulty of position, many incompatible duties, dependence on the will of others, want of pecuniary means, or all of these combined. The cause or causes, though quite apparent and necessarily con-

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straining to yourself, may not be equally visible to the world; and the fear of being looked upon by those who do not understand your position, as one whose faith, being without works, is dead, and thus dishonouring to the cause of your Master, is perhaps adding a deeper shade to your discouragement—a sharper sting to your sorrow. Is it so? Then we would attempt to impress the blessed fact upon your mind, that you are now in a working position, if you have a working spirit. In the routine of your every-day life, you have work given you to do, although you do not recognise it,—it is waiting at your side, although you are looking away in search of something which your Master has not seen fit to give.

One great and general mistake evidently arises from a separation between the different parts of the Christian's duty. A young believer was one day mourning over the quantity of *world's work* which she had to do. "Do not call it such," said a farther advanced friend; "there is no world's work to the believer; it is all the *Lord's work*." In short, the Christian's whole life is a work for God; when he becomes the Lord's, he ceases to be his own. He is bought with a price; and from the time when he feels the first rush of grateful love, there need never be an hour or a moment in which he is not accomplishing the primary part of "man's chief end,"—the glorifying of God. He may rise up in the bright morning prime, and go forth to the various duties

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and intricacies of the day with the blessed assurance that the eye of his benign Master is smiling upon him the while, and that He is accepting and treasuring the smallest services, if done for His sake, and washed in the blood that is required to purify all; and when, returning to his home, he enjoys the rest and relaxation of the sweet dewy evening, he may rejoice in the thought that this also is not wasted time, but that in fitting and refreshing him for the morrow's work, it is in itself also service for God.

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II.

WARFARE WORK.

"Then said they unto him, What shall we do, that we might work the works of God? Jesus answered and said unto them, This is the work of God, that ye believe on him whom he hath sent."—JOHN vi. 28, 29.

"Every one with one of his hands wrought in the work, and with the other hand held a weapon."—NEH. iv. 17.

"Fight the fight, Christian,
Jesus is o'er thee;
Run the race, Christian,
Heaven's before thee.
Thee from the love of Christ,
Nothing can sever;
Mount, when thy work is done,
Praise Him for ever."

WE have placed this species of work first, although it is not an outer, but an inner service. The results of the struggle are, however, apparent to all, and the work that has been begun in the hidden temple, will manifest itself in the external vineyard. In fact, without the warfare there can be no successful work; without the weapon in the one hand, there is little use of the trowel in the other. Till the soul has worked out its own salvation with fear and trembling, the hand will not be confident, nor the step unfaltering in the service of God.

There is no danger of any Christian being without

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work in abundance, for sufficient is here laid before him for a long life-time. It is not easy to believe; nay, it is very difficult truly and simply to believe in Jesus Christ; and yet in the passage quoted above, He himself speaks of it as the work of all others, which is to be worked for God. When our hearts are crusted over by carnal reason, and doubt, and difficulty, it is no easy matter to take again the heart of a little child, and simply believe our Father's true word; yet this is a needful work for His children. When self-righteousness, strong and throbbing, whispers that it is long enough for a couch, and broad enough for a covering, then it is difficult indeed to cast off its "rags," and to put on a spotless robe which we have had no share in weaving; yet, this too is one of the works of God. When all within us is dark and dreary; when a thick, heavy veil seems to hang between us and all that was once clear and bright to our vision; when we *know*, but do not *feel*, that we are sinners, and Jesus Christ a Saviour,—then there is nothing in the whole world so difficult as to look up and say, "My Lord, and my God." But, every time that we take the sword of the Spirit and cleave asunder the veil, and mount up, up, far beyond the mists, to the light-surrounded throne, and see there, and love there the Lamb as it had been slain, we are working a work more honouring to God than any other. Look up then, desponding and self-righteous, and doubting believer, look up—believe and live—believe and *work*.

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This, however, is but the beginning of warfare work,—it is continued through the whole upward struggle. Holiness, the result of faith,—does not enter the heart quietly and gently, though it brings joy and peace; it causes a hard struggle, a fierce warfare with the old unholy inhabitants of the heart. We may fully trust in earthly friend or father, and there is none to hinder us; we may pour devoted love upon beings like ourselves, and all within the heart is in unison; but we cannot confide in Him who beseeches our confidence, without contesting every inch of the ground with fierce foes from within; we cannot love Him, who is the lover of our souls, without heart rivals starting up to dispute the supremacy. Where is the human heart that has not its besetting sin, its chosen idol? Where is the renewed heart that is not struggling, or attempting to struggle, in the agonies of its crucifixion? The idol-breaking work in each individual is as much of a reality, as the iconoclastic work of bygone centuries—the idols that are unseen, are as real as the Juggernauts of India, and the images of Rome. Every time, however, that the Holy Spirit enables us to dethrone the usurper, to bear the suffering, to resist the temptation, to love the Loving One, to trust in the true Friend, we are gaining ground in holiness—the chief end of the new creation—and we are working the work of God. Nor is it alone for Him; it is also a work for others—every self-conquest, every progress in

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sanctification, is an increase of influence over souls. When the armour is laid aside—when the sword falls from the nerveless arm—when sin is allowed to triumph, and holiness is forgotten, or deferred till the morrow—then words of warning to the sinner, of counsel to the backsliding, of sympathy to the sorrowful, come carelessly and coldly from our lips. It is only when we have put on the whole armour of God—when we are resisting unto blood, striving against sin—when we are mourning over our defeats, and fleeing to the Strong One for strength, that we can minister to the needy, that we can arm the unarmed, that we can shew the way to Him who giveth us the victory through Christ our living Lord.

Besides this inner struggle, there is another which bears more upon the outward life, and may be called a warfare with circumstance. We have said that it is only the renewed heart that is the battle-ground of the one, but all are more or less engaged in the other. All have a crook in the lot, a skeleton at the feast; all have a conflict to maintain with contending duties and perplexing difficulties, with intricate positions, with cares, strifes, and sorrows. Very different, however, are the ways in which this warfare is waged. Some struggle because they cannot help it, and are like "the dumb driven cattle;" others are so feeble in their grasp, so faltering in their step, that they soon

"By the roadside fall and perish,
Weary with the march of Life."

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Others attempt to strew the ground with flowers, to dispel the darkness with *ignes fatui*—to conceal even from themselves that they have a conflict to maintain; although none know better how the iron of unused weapons enters into the soul, how sharp are the thorns of the rose, how deluding is the light of the meteor. Others are strong in their own strength, and stoically bear the wounds, and handle the weapons, but a time of defeat surely comes, when they are heard to say, "All these things are against us." It is the Christian only, who, going not forth at his own charges, can engage in the Life-battle joyfully and successfully. That victory which secures temporal rest and enjoyment, is of less importance to him than to others, for he knows that all things are working together for his good, and he is sure of a coming time of entire repose; but he struggles against despondency, he conquers difficulties, he rises above sorrows and disappointments, that his Father may be glorified in him to the utmost, and that by so doing he may work a good work of faith and patience.

The encouragements to warfare work are many and great. The Captain of our salvation is pledged for our victory. He is engaged to "cover our heads in the day of battle," and through Him we shall be more than conquerors. Unlike the iron warriors of the earth, His heart bleeds in His soldier's wounds; He feels the pangs of the cut off arm and the plucked out eye; and He rejoices in His own promise of a

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blessed future, when "the warfare shall be accomplished," when the conquered land shall be possessed. We cannot conclude this chapter better than by the following extract from Gurnall's "Christian in Complete Armour:"—"The Christian armour is made to be worn; no laying down or putting off our armour, till we have done our warfare, and finished our course. Our armour and our garments of flesh go off together; then indeed will be no need of watch and ward, shield or helmet. Those military duties and field graces, (as I may call faith, hope, and the rest,) they shall be honourably discharged. In heaven we shall appear, not in armour, but in robes of glory; but here they are to be worn night and day; we must walk, work, and sleep in them, or else we are not true soldiers of Christ."

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III.

EVERY-DAY WORK.

"Whether therefore ye eat or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do *all* to the glory of God."—1 Cor. x. 31.

"We need not bid, for cloister'd cell,
Our neighbour and our work farewell,
Nor strive to wind ourselves too high
For sinful man beneath the sky.
The trivial round, the common task,
Would furnish all we ought to ask,—
Room to deny ourselves,—a road
To bring us daily nearer God."—Keble.

"All may of Thee partake,
Nothing can be so mean,
Which with this tincture, FOR THY SAKE,
Will not grow bright and clean;
This is the famous stone
That turneth all to gold,
For that which God doth touch and own,
Cannot for less be told."—Herbert.

Those who wish to bestow the years of their life upon God, must also give Him the days, the hours, and the moments. Bickersteth says, "Only think of present duties, the moment's work: our life is given to us in moments, and we shall have joys for each." Every-day work is often looked upon as waste of time, or only fitted for those who have no exalted sensibilities, no heroic purposes, no aspirations after the higher

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services of God. We strongly suspect, however, that those who can see no true sublimity in the faithful performance of lowly and self-denying tasks, even to the "sweeping of a floor" if need be,* will fall very far short of the heroism and magnanimity required for the sacrifices and the services which they think themselves prepared to offer. On the other hand, the missionary will be all the better fitted for his noble career, if he has been faithful in the daily mission of life; the martyr will not suffer with less fortitude, because he has long taken up meekly the daily cross. Heroism, in fact, is rarely understood to be, simply,—uncompromised duty! Heroism, which is not duty, is but a dream of the dark ages. Duty that is not performed with the spirit of a hero, is but the mortar and the brick of hard bondage. The hero understood this, who proclaimed to his heroes, no premature pæans of secure victory, no highly wrought representations of martial glory, but the simple words, "England expects every man to do his duty!" and the aggregate of individual duty was triumphant heroism. In the daily walks of life unseen and unadmired, there may exist the truest heroic elements; and

> "All may find, if they dare choose,
> A glorious life and grave"

in the sphere of commonplace duty. It is not very long since a prince in Israel went from amidst his

* "He that sweeps a floor as for God's law,
Makes that and the action fine."—HERBERT.

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peers, and most of his "glorious life" was lived in a grocer's shop. We think that none can rise from the perusal of the "Successful Merchant,"* without feeling the strength and the stateliness of that spirit of grace, which can shed beauty upon what might else be unseemly, and stamp nobility where the world had not bestowed it. "Elizius, an eminent French bishop, born at Chatelât, A.D. 588, became known in the Church, not from the fame of his learning, not from the austerities practised in his age, but from the skill, fidelity, and success which he displayed in the goldsmith's shop, which was then the scene of his daily labours. His learned biographer says,—'Religion gave him strength and interest in his work; and as his work constrained him to attend to earthly things, he felt all the more the necessity of refreshing his spirit with spiritual things.' The religion which had thus shed its lustre upon the shop of the artisan, did not stop there. The influence which his honesty, economy, and frequently tried principle, obtained for him, paved the way for his religious labours amongst the ignorant people by whom he was surrounded, and when a bishopric became vacant, that required to be filled by one peculiarly laborious and devoted, he was unanimously elected. His goings out and comings in, and the commencement of all his undertakings, had long been accompanied by prayer, while the open Bible, which we are told was spread before the dili-

* Or Memoirs of Samuel Budget, Esq. By William Arthur, A.M.

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gent fashioner of the fine gold, was the best school of divinity for the future bishop.*

It is a common idea, and we may venture to say, a common mistake, that attention to every-day affairs is incompatible with genius. Now it seems to us that the highest attainment and ambition of this rarely understood gift—especially in woman—ought to be the power of performing all duty, from the highest to the humblest, with energy and success, so that its possessor may bestow happiness, soothe sorrows, inculcate truth, and accomplish the tasks of Life more successfully than they from whom it has been withheld. The genius which turns in disgust from what is plain and homely, and confines itself to the ecstatic regions of sentiment, is a spurious or at best a defective quality, and lacks the unity and enlargement of true power.

Look around then, you who are yearning to be employed in the service of your God, and try to realize what He has given you to do *to-day*, and do not look beyond it. Strength is promised according to your day, but not according to your morrow. Every-day work requires every-day grace, and every-day grace requires every-day asking. Just try the experiment then, for once,—no matter what your occupation may be,—no matter how distasteful to your natural disposition,—the more distasteful the

* "Light in the Dark Places; or, Memorials of Christian Life in the Middle Ages." From the German of Neander.

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better, so long as it is your duty. It may be the arithmetic lesson taught to the little wayward child —or the wearisome drive with the complaining invalid—or the petty and fatiguing duties and arrangements attendant upon your household concerns, or the routine of the shop, or the counting-house, or the writing-office; whatever it is, take it first to God. Before you begin, kneel and implore His blessing; ask Him for a fresh, diligent spirit; ask Him for a spirit of patience and meekness in contending with all the little wearisome difficulties and annoyances connected with it; ask Him to enable you not only to *bear* the daily cross, but to "take it up," denying yourself and following the footsteps of the Lord Jesus. (Luke ix. 23.) Then put your whole might into it,—the might that you have borrowed from a mightier than yourself, for that is the secret of real work. Do it as if your Master were standing before you,—do it as you would have cast the net into the sea,—as you would have fastened together the tent, —as you would have laboured in the carpenter's shop,—had you lived in the early days with Christ and His Apostles. Do not offer to God the blind, and the lame, and the maimed things of your mind; do not offer a spirit dreaming of the great things which you could do, or may do at some other time, but offer to Him your wakeful, rejoicing, *present* energies, and you will find how brightly the day beams upon you, —how sweetly the night gives you sleep,—and how

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gratefully your heart swells with a sense of the tenderness of God as a Father, as well as His benignity as a Master.

We think it was John Newton who went one day to visit a Christian brother, and found him busily engaged in his occupation of tanning. The man attempted to apologize. "Just so, my friend," said his pastor, "may your Lord find you when He comes; it is the work He has given you to do, and He expects you to do it diligently."

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IV.

SOCIAL WORK.

"Let the beauty of the Lord our God be upon us; and establish thou the work of our hands upon us."—PSALM xc. 17.
"Adorn the doctrine of God our Saviour in all things."—TITUS ii. 10.

"I ask thee for a thoughtful love,
Through constant watching wise,
To meet the glad with joyful smiles,
And wipe the weeping eyes:
And a heart at leisure from itself,
To soothe and sympathize.

"Wherever in the world I am,
In whatsoe'er estate,
I have a fellowship of hearts,
To keep and cultivate;
And a work of lowly love to do,
For the Lord on whom I wait."

THERE are few trials so grievous to the Christian as the necessity of being much in uncongenial society; even if his natural temperament is not entirely opposed to it, his renewed one revolts from it altogether. If this is your position, dear friend, we can imagine your heart fainting, and your spirit failing within you. When you would love to be still and silent, with your heart lifted up in blessed communion with your Saviour, or taking "sweet counsel" with His people, or when you would fain be employed in

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active service in His vineyard, you are obliged to go into scenes whence you return home despondingly, feeling that there you have left some of your precious things, without having imparted them to others; your bodily strength is worn out by what seems labour worse than wasted, and day after day finds you and leaves you weary, and useless, and murmuring. This must not be. When safely within the ark yourself, you are, it is true,

> "Sheltered, but not to social duties lost:
> Secluded, but not buried."
>
> WORDSWORTH.

God has allotted to you a social work to do for Him, and how grieved He must be when His servant, Jonah-like, flies from it. It has been eloquently said by one, herself, alas! a stranger to the highest element of this species of service,—"No, we cannot leave society while one clod remains unpervaded by Divine life. We cannot live and grow in consecrated earth alone."* Keep this work ever before you—self-denial is one part of it; the adorning of the doctrine of your Saviour is another; the winning of souls to Christ by your influence, noiseless and nameless as it may be, is another; and soon you will find the evil to yourself obviated, despondency vanishing, and an object of deep interest rising into your present objectless life. To give an example how the principle may be reduced to practice in what are called "little things," (although nothing is little in the sight

* Memoirs of Margaret Fuller Ossoli.

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of the great God;) the next time that your brow is shadowed and your tone impatient because of the arrival of one visitor after another, interrupting a favourite occupation; or a cherished scheme of doing good; or that you are obliged to go forth to the social circle, when you would rather be resting beside your own pleasant fireside; go to Him who went forth from the mountain, and the Kedron, to be buffeted in the busy world—ask for the same Spirit that was in Him, to make you a willing servant in any way that He pleases; take up the little cross cheerfully, smooth your perturbed brow, get your heart filled with interest, and your eyes brightened with kindliness; and in the pleasant glance, the genuine cordiality, the gentle word spoken in season, perchance to those not accustomed to gentleness, you will be doing real though humble work for God,—all the more real and the more acceptable that it is work which none will know and none applaud.

Inseparable from this kind of work, there is the work of influence, both conscious and unconscious; for the latter we would refer our readers to the admirable little tract called "Unconscious Influence;" with regard to the former, we would seek to impress upon all the necessity of cultivating diligently a talent which God has confided to the trust of every one. There is no form of false humility more common than that which prompts the remark, "Alas! *I* possess no influence,—what can *I* do?" Now it is true

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that many have no wealth, no beauty, no rank, no accomplishments, no intellect; but there never has been a heart created since the world began, that has not received and exerted the precious though much-abused gift of influence. How is this? Just because every heart has the power of loving. We have heard the well-known answer of Cecil's little daughter, quoted by one of the greatest of our living poets, as containing the essence of the truest, most thrilling poetry; it certainly contains the essence of the truest influence:—"Mary, why does every body love you so much?" "Oh, papa, I think it must be because I love every body!"

Here, then, is a work which all have to do. "Love is power;" therefore love is work, if the power is used for God. The sunshine has its work to do; it penetrates into all dark places, all dreary nooks and crevices, lighting up and cheering; it brings life and warmth to the chilled and torpid; it gives colour to the flower, and ripeness to the fruit; it takes a message into every heart, for all hearts love the sunshine, and it speaks of hope and comfort even to the kneelers beside a dying bed. Just so may the loving heart do: it may not be a powerful heart—it may not be a wise heart—it may not be a rich heart; but if it is a loving heart, it will go about cheering and lighting up, warming and colouring, and ripening all things just like the sun. One of the most hardened offenders in Newgate, when she was brought to the

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feet of Jesus in her right mind, declared that it was Mrs. Fry's "*Look of Love*," that first led her to hope that she too might be saved; and most of us know well the effect of a kindly sympathizing look, shining upon us in the midst of heart darkness, like a burst of light and blue sky on a "rainy day," that was "cold, and dark, and dreary."

Closely allied to the loving heart and the loving look is the loving manner; and yet these three are often at variance, and we are wounded by the thorns and the briers when beneath are blossoming fresh lovely rose-buds. Many very good people seem to think it a duty to keep their hearts locked and padlocked, for fear of casting their pearls into the mire; others are intensely disagreeable, because it is their way, and "what does manner signify?" Others are painfully aware of their defects, but the habits of early life are too strong for them. And so it comes to pass that we so frequently meet with that anomaly in grace,—*a disagreeable Christian.* Have you ever thought seriously of the sin which it involves? Have you ever thought that it makes the religion of your gentle, genial Master appear disagreeable too? Have you ever thought, that as the Lord Jesus Christ looks upon the cup of cold water as given to Him, so He will look upon the wounded feeling, the repulsed confidence, the bruised spirit, as given to Him also? Oh, it is a sad thing to fold up in a napkin the talent of manner, to lose the key of the casket, to forget

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the *Sesame* to the hearts of men! Let it not be objected that this implies insincerity or affectation,—that it is assuming something which is not felt. If the heart is right with God, glowing with love to Jesus, and filled with the fruits of the Spirit, there is no fear of insincerity in a manner expressing interest, and sympathy, and kindness, and compassion towards all; for all are "possible angels," possible redeemed ones!

Closely connected with the law of love, there is the "Law of Consideration." Mrs. Hannah More, of whom we shall give a slight sketch at the end of the chapter, was so impressed with the necessity of this quality, that she expressed her intention of writing a treatise upon it, which, however, she unhappily never accomplished. It is not so necessarily a part of love as influence, for many loving hearts who would lay them down to die for the objects of their affections, yet lack the minute thoughtfulness, the attentive watching, the intuitive knowledge, "the determination,"—to use Mrs. More's words—"to be the author, in the common matters of life, of as little unnecessary uneasiness, trouble, or inconvenience as possible," which are essential parts of the law of consideration. This law is simply a fulfilment in its strictest sense of the command, "Love thy neighbour as thyself;" for who does not like to be thought of, and thought for? Who does not wish to be saved from the pin-points of trouble and uneasiness which we suffer, and make others suffer every day from

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want of consideration? This quality is peculiarly alluded to, when God says, "Blessed is he that *considereth* the poor," which is not a benediction upon those who give large alms and do great things for them, but upon those who *consider* their case, and with wisdom and tenderness think for them and do for them according to their ability.

We must allude in passing, to a subject which often causes doubt and embarrassment to the conscientious Christian, viz., the lawfulness of cultivating what are called "accomplishments." In accordance with the views stated above, we look upon it as a *duty* to do so. Has God given beautiful gifts for the purpose of being buried in the earth? If the soul-cheering art of the musician, the singing of sweet songs, and the still more noble studies of the pencil and the palette, are not abused, but used for the relaxation and refreshment of the wearied mind, and as means of influence and attraction over others, they are consecrated into work for the Bountiful One, who giveth us all things, richly to be enjoyed. Indeed, viewed as the medium of giving pleasure, they become no small element in the social work; there are ever some irritable and Saul-like temperaments which can be soothed and comforted by heart-reaching strains of music; there are ever some minds which will give more respect to the religion that is accompanied by gifts and accomplishments, simply and cheerfully exercised.

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The quality most required in social work, is that most difficult to be obtained even at a throne of grace, —unselfishness! There are few imputations from which we start back so sensitively as the charge of selfishness, and never is it more justly founded than when in our own estimation we are peculiarly free from its dominion. All our social faults, however, flow from this source, and we are apt to forget that it is not only selfishness displayed to men, but also displayed to Him who pleased not Himself. God has given us His will upon this point clearly and strongly expressed in the Golden Rule—"Whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them," and its twin commandment—"Love thy neighbour as thyself." Such, doubtless, is the code of the social circle above, but it is *not* upon earth as it is in heaven. From whence proceeds that "entrenchment in our own individuality," as it has been well expressed by a modern writer, which prevents us from admitting any within the pale of our sympathies, who do not "interest" us, as the phrase is, or with whom we have "no ideas in common?" From whence comes the feeling of self-congratulation—"Lo, I am better than thou, wiser than thou, created of finer clay, and gifted with higher intelligence than thou?" From whence come the indifferent manner, the hasty judgment, the supercilious look, the witty story told at the expense of an acquaintance? From whence the carelessness of the pur-

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suits, the wishes and the feelings of our neighbours? From whence, save from the deliberate breach of God's commandments. Christians though we be, we do *not* love our neighbour as ourselves,—we do *not* unto him as we wish him to do unto us.

Here is a work then placed before each, a work of obedience so arduous and so momentous, that instead of any bemoaning the absence of work, they might be more easily excused, were they to exclaim despondingly—"Who is sufficient for these things?" Up, then, rouse you from your lethargy,—do battle with the principle of self within you,—unlock this exclusiveness,—escape from this indifference. What! indifferent to any whom you may meet in heaven, or rescue from hell? Throw shaft and pulley into the yet unworked mine of manner, of affection, of influence, and precious will be the treasures that come forth from the depths. Replace the gossip, the self-estimation, the superciliousness by kind looks, thoughtful actions, encouraging words. Lend a helping hand to some, who, though they have failed to "interest," may yet be sorely discouraged because of the way. Draw forth the good that there is in all. "None are all evil." Many hearts that appear hard and inaccessible will be found in the sunshine of kindness like the granite rock in the south, which emits sweet music at sunrise. Many still more icy, resemble the snowy Andes which are not without their currents of genial air.

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Were there no other instrument for social work placed in our possession than the wonderful one of *speech*, what a wide range of usefulness would be opened up to us, and how startling the thought of the multitude of "idle words" which are gathering against us for the day of judgment! One able writer* informs us that every spoken word causes a vibration in the air which spreads in all directions round the whole world, and produces a change in the atmosphere which alters it through all future time. Another† declares that "the air is one vast library in whose pages are for ever written all that man has said, and woman whispered." Alas! for the bulky volumes of the idle and the hurtful thus strangely registered, compared with the small compass required for words to which God hearkens and writes in the book of His remembrance. Such statements in some measure realize to us the wonderful significance of language which in some such way may now be registering its silent records, hereafter to witness against us with loud and startling re-utterance.

To draw the poison from "the unruly evil," to tame the tameless member, to guide aright the small helm which turneth about great ships,‡ is no easy, unworthy, or merely negative work. "Pleasant words are as an honey-comb, sweet to the soul, and pleasant to the bones."§ The fountain which has

* Dr. Hitchcock in his "Religion of Geology." † Mr. Babbage.
‡ James iii. 4-8. § Prov. xvi. 24.

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hitherto sent forth a bitter flood, may send forth the sweet waters of affection and blessing; the "idle words" may be changed into the busy ones of gentleness and sympathy; the harsh accents into a sweet voice, persuading men to listen to the yet sweeter, which says, "Beloved, love one another."

So important is the social vocation, that we cannot consider any species or degree of work,—needful though it may seem,—to be work befitting the Christian, which interferes with the cultivation of social interests, and social amenities. It is at best only one species of work untimeously displacing another, which cannot be pleasing to the God of order and design. We quote the following admirable passage from the accomplished authoress of "Anna; or, Passages in a Home Life." "When God is teaching us lessons on this subject, we begin to see that circumstances as well as commands are but an expression of His will. We then feel that no outward thing can really 'hinder' us. A 'vexatious interruption to duty,' we perceive to be a contradiction in terms. . . . Let us thank God and take courage when it is so with us; let us take the full comfort of this *fact*,—that we are servants, and have really no work of our own to do,—nothing which we are striving to accomplish *on our own account*. We have no selfish schemes which circumstances may thwart, we acknowledge no selfish hopes which they may destroy. It is blessedness, indeed, to have

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accepted as our only portion, that His will should be done,—in us, and for us, and by us for ever!"

It must be remarked that there is no small degree of danger connected with social work, and no small degree of grace required to enable us to walk in wisdom. The temptations are great to overstep the line of demarcation between the social sphere in which God has placed us, and the worldly sphere in which God has *not* placed us,—to be unduly all things to all men, and to seek, and perhaps to find, a degree of popularity which may interfere with the simplicity of our work. Rutherford says, that the Christian in society must be like "the fresh river that keepeth its own fresh taste in the salt sea."

We are not without bright examples of the practicability and the importance of such a work. One there was, who lately belonged to our own times, but who now belongs to the times of heaven; her spirit like the sandal tree was fragrant as well as fruitful, and though the life has departed from the stem, the fragrance yet lingers, and the fruit yet remains. Fifty years ago a lovely spot in Wiltshire received the name of Barley Wood. Situated on elevated ground commanding picturesque and beautiful views, its lawns and its gardens bore the marks of graceful and constant cultivation. So retired and so peaceful was its aspect, that when told it was the abode of a Christian lady, the passer-by might think that she had taken wings like a dove, according to

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the wish of the Psalmist, and flown away from the busy world. Barley Wood, however, was in one sense a world in miniature. Rank and wealth and fashion found their way there, to sun themselves in the smile of a graceful and courteous hostess. Men of taste and literature sought the dwelling of Hannah More. The afflicted, and the ignorant, and the perplexed, went for help and instruction. There was besides another world of correspondence to be dealt with,—a large system of schools to be superintended, the most arduous literary tasks to be performed—while the woman called to these conflicting claims and duties was no longer young, but bowed down by sickness and bereavement. How then do we find her performing her social work under such trying circumstances? We are told by the biographers of Hannah More, that when first introduced to worldly people, she did not immediately enter upon the subject of religion, but tried to use the charm of her influence to do away prejudice, and to prepare the way for more personal dealing; if, however, she knew that she might not again have an opportunity, she used to come to the point at once. Peculiarly sensible to her influence, many youthful hearts were thus led to Jesus, and in the midst of the most worldly society, she never forgot to confess her Master before men. It was said of her that whatever was the party and the topic, "upon her tongue was the law of kindness; there was never a word to offend, or wound,

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or grieve, but always something to instruct and improve. Her thoughts were always given to the business of the moment with concentration and energy; nor was any duty too small to be performed with care and prayerful diligence, if it was large enough to affect the comfort, the feelings, and the interests of those around her. Along with the marvellous testimonies to her Christian and social graces, which greeted this mother in Israel on all sides, there was one, which, although simple and homely in its expression, requires many, and various, and *rare* qualities—she was pronounced to be "a person most easy to be lived with."

Wilberforce was another great and striking example of religion carried into the social sphere without injury to his own spirituality. When he went into society he used to prepare what he called "*launchers*," or questions and subjects for discourse, suitable for introducing the spiritual conversation, which he endeavoured to make useful to a class of whom Wesley said, in a message to Hannah More, "Tell her to make that her sphere—they will not listen to *us*." Lord Bacon makes the following striking observations in his Essay upon Goodness:—"If a man be gracious and courteous to strangers, it shews he is a citizen of the world, and that his heart is no island cut off from other lands, but a continent that joins to them; if he be compassionate towards the afflictions of others, it shews that his heart is like the

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noble tree, that is wounded itself when it gives the balm; if he easily pardons and remits offences, it shews that his mind is planted above injuries, so that he cannot be shot; if he be thankful for small benefits, it shews that he weighs men's minds, and not their trash; but above all, if he have St. Paul's perfection, that he would wish to be an anathema from Christ, for the salvation of his brethren, it shews much of a divine nature, and a kind of conformity with Christ himself."

Without multiplying examples and quotations, however, we shall only farther cite an often read, often lauded, often forgotten, yet faultless code for social manners. Were its sublime precepts to be fully observed, the wilderness might blossom as the rose, the lion might lie down with the lamb, and there might be nothing to hurt or destroy in the holy mountain. "Charity suffereth long, and is kind; charity envieth not; charity vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up, doth not behave itself unseemly, seeketh not her own, is not easily provoked, thinketh no evil; rejoiceth not in iniquity, but rejoiceth in the truth; beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things."—1 Cor. xiii. 4-7.

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V.

HOME WORK.

"Howbeit Jesus suffered him not; but saith unto him, Go home to thy friends, and tell them how great things the Lord hath done for thee."—MARK v. 19.
"And Moses verily was faithful in all his house."—HEB. iii. 5.

"Poor indeed thou must be, if around thee
Thou no ray of light and joy canst throw,
If no silken cord of love hath bound thee,
To some little world through weal and wo.

"If no dear eyes thy tender love can brighten,
No fond voices answer to thy own,
If no brother's sorrow thou canst lighten,
By daily sympathy and gentle tone.

"Daily struggling, though enclosed and lonely,
Every day a rich reward will give,
Thou wilt find, by hearty striving only,
And truly loving, thou canst truly live."

HARRIET WINSLOW.

THERE is a safe and easily applied test by which to determine whether the Christian in society is indeed working for God or for himself. If the social work is not carried into the home, finding there a narrower, though not less difficult sphere, there ought to arise a suspicion, that excitement and love of popularity may have somewhat to do with our social zeal. That Church which sent forth its whole strength in missions to far lands, and left its home

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thousands to starve and die, could not be in a healthy condition; and that soul is in much the same state, which expends its energies upon work without doors, and neglects the work within. If each individual Christian performed faithfully his and her share in the *home mission*—if each cultivated carefully the little garden within his own gates—if each were a faithful steward in the household charge, there would, indeed, be fewer homes that are not homes—there would be fewer flowerless and unwatered gardens—there would be fewer of those arrears of which the Lord, when He comes, will take strict account.

There is one feeling and desire in the human heart which is universal—all wish *to be understood.* In ordinary acquaintanceship, how frequently the complaint meets the ear—"We cannot come on together, for he never *understands* me." The constitution of the one mind is a mystery to the other—the language of the one heart an unknown tongue to the other. It is strange that in the home, and by the household hearth, encircled by one family, where we might expect misapprehension to be unknown, it exists as frequently as in any other place; jars, coldnesses, constraints, and dissensions, all arise from it—while even sisters, whose hearts God has created to throb in unison, are often obliged to seek elsewhere that appreciation and sympathy which they have not found in each other. Now, there is a serious home sin involved here. Whenever any one complains of not

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being understood, it will generally be found to arise from the want of trying *to understand.* If people would think less of themselves, and be less intensely sympathetic with the intricacies and sensitivenesses of their own hearts, and pay more attention to the peculiarities of others, the evil would probably be greatly obviated. We are aware that many feel rather proud than otherwise of "not being understood," even in their own homes, and consider it a proof of genius and highly-wrought sensibilities. We cannot help regarding it, however, as a mark of decided inferiority of mind. True genius is ever easily understood, and true genius ever easily understands. They who are really possessed of true genius, combined with deep and tender feeling, are in possession of treasures not to be locked up in inaccessible coffers, or brought out occasionally to be counted and admired, but to be used every day to gladden and benefit all around. Let them sympathize with others, and others will soon sympathize with them. Let them cast the light of their love upon home hearts, and it will soon so illumine their own, that all who run may read the once mysterious characters.

In home work, home sunshine is a very important element. Many conscientious people strive to perform, and actually do perform, all their home duties faithfully and earnestly, and still there is felt to be somewhere a startling deficiency. They are not seen in their homes as their Saviour would have been, had

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He shared a home wherein to lay His head, diffusing light and strength, and consolation. What is specially lacking there, is joyfulness blended with their work. They have not taken the joy of the Lord as their strength, and they have separated the two things which God hath joined together—duty and sunshine.

> "A solemn yet a joyful thing is life,
> Which, being full of duties, is for this
> Of gladness full, and full of lofty hopes."

Even as the sunbeam is composed of millions of minute rays, the home light must be constituted of little tendernesses, kindly looks, sweet laughter, gentle words, loving counsels; it must not be like the torch-blaze of natural excitement, which is easily quenched, but like the serene, chastened light, which burns as safely in the day of the east wind as in the serenest atmosphere. Let each bear the other's burden the while—let each cultivate the mutual confidence, which is a gift capable of increase and improvement—and soon it will be found that kindliness will spring up on every side, displacing constraint, unsuitability, want of mutual knowledge, even as we have seen sweet violets and primrose buds dispelling the gloom of the grey sea rocks.

The most obvious of all home sins is that of *temper*. Too often do Christians, who are all sweetness and graciousness in society, appear (to use the simile of Rowland Hill) as if ingrafted upon crab-trees in

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their own homes. The most visible manifestations of this sin, in passionate outbreaks, violent words, and fits of sullenness, are so odious in themselves, and cause so much misery to their authors, as well as to their victims, that when a Christian is liable to be possessed by this evil spirit, he is generally on his guard, and watches and mourns because of it. There are various lesser degrees, however, which are often perceptible in those who would be exceedingly, and, perchance, justly indignant were they to be designated as ill-tempered. The want of gentleness in tone and look—the needless difficulty and objection thrown in the way of the eager and the energetic—the undue regard to our own "dignity" (much abused word) when offended, forgetting that

"To err is human—to forgive divine;"

the maintenance of our own opinions simply because they *are* our own, and the feeling of irritation at the opposition they encounter—the assumption, however slight, of superiority and self-importance—the undue attachment to our own methods and our own ways—the painful allusion and ill-timed jest—the jealousy of others, and the over-exaction of affection, attention, and sympathy, are all off-shoots of the crab-tree:—and even as we find in nature the finest species of apples, if unpruned and uncultivated, returning to the native crab, so the heart, unkept and untended, will become, even when renewed, bitter in its fruits, and degenerate in its soil.

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Great part of the home work, therefore, will consist in a constant watch and ward over this besetting sin, in its dwelling within the heart, as well as its outward avenues. It is not enough to repress the word, if the irritated feeling remains within; it is not enough to smooth the unloving look, if the heart itself be void of love; and this must be done not for our own comfort, because a happy home is desirable, or because it is pleasant to be loved and praised, but because it is part of the work by which God is to be glorified in us. This principle must be carried into every relation of life; without it there is danger, on the one hand, of the work being turned into self-idolatry, or idolatry of others as belonging to ourselves; and, on the other hand, of its being left undone.

The mother is too apt to joy in her little ones as "her own," forgetting that they are bought with a price, and are not hers, but God's. In the instruction she chooses for them—in the amusements she permits them—in their whole training, excellent as it may be, she is prone to work at her own hands, that she and they may be exalted, or at the best, that they may be preserved from the dangers and difficulties of the way, and secure the salvation of their souls. Too often does she forget that the chiefest motives of her work must be to bring God glory, and so to teach her children, that they in their turn may glorify Him, each spreading wider the circles

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of influence produced by the work of all, but more especially by the work of a mother.

The mistress would succeed better in her responsible charge—she would attain more easily to the happy medium between discouraging severity and culpable indulgence or indifference—she would not so often fail in attaching to her the hearts of her household—she would have her work better done, and her injunctions more faithfully obeyed, if she remembered that it is part of her appointed service to God, to teach those entrusted to her care to be active servants, useful members of society, and happy Christians.

There would not so often be the coldness and reserve between sister and brother, sister and sister-in-law, and even between sister and sister, which too often mar the peace, or at least the rejoicing confidence of a family circle, were it borne in mind that not a jar, not a clouded brow, not a hasty word, but is dishonouring to His name, and grieving to His heart, who set the people of the earth in families. The solemn consideration of each having to perform to each the will of their mutual God, would soothe many an irritated spirit, and open the bolts and bars of many a closed heart.

If the wife, whose portion too often appears to be one of heart-weariness and disappointment, of hopeless exposure to selfish and unreasonable temper,—would but set herself to her work, forgetting her

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own trials in the earnest desire to glorify God, by rectifying what is amiss in her conjugal relations, and by exerting the sweet influences of woman's affection, bearing and forbearing,—overlooking what is faulty, and cherishing what is good, she would reap her reward in due time. The old simple story of a smile, may not be out of place here. A woman who lived very unhappily with her husband, came to a great divine to ask his counsel. "Always meet your husband with a smile," said the wise man. She followed his advice, and very soon returned to thank him for the blessing of a happy home. Whenever a home landscape is dreary, and its horizon clouded, we believe that it proceeds not so much from the storms of man's petulance and unreasonableness, as because woman has forgotten to draw a sunbeam from the Sun of Righteousness.

In home work it must ever be borne in mind, that it is but a home for a little while, and that the chief object of the Home Missionary is to lead those who now circle the board and the hearth to seek the things that are above, and to form a family and a home in heaven. Often the Lord calls one of a household, and when He has engaged that heart to follow Him, He sends it home to tell what great things the Lord has done. Not always, however, is the report listened to. There may be long years of indifference, and diminished affection, and scorn, and even persecution, but let such a solitary

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one take courage. Let her pray unwearied the prayer of faith; and while never yielding one iota of principle, let her cultivate every iota of tenderness; let her preach silent sermons of example, and speak judicious words of precept. God will yet set her in a family of grace. The light will yet shine upon the hearts that have had light close to them though they acknowledged it not. The prayer for all those life-relations which our Lord himself sanctioned and enjoyed, will yet be answered far more abundantly than we can ask or think.

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VI.

SINGLE WOMEN'S WORK.

"The unmarried woman careth for the things of the Lord."—1 Cor. vii. 34.
"Favour is deceitful, and beauty is vain: but a woman that feareth the Lord, she shall be praised."—Prov. xxxi. 30.

"Gather thou not together in a net,
The love, the strength, the work which God hath set
For the wide household of the earth.—Go forth,
Free and unfettered, east, west, south, and north;
No symbol but the inner Cross of Faith,
No rules but what the Lord Jehovah saith;
Go forth, work cheerly, love divinely, raise
Thy lonely heart in songs of joy and praise,
Fulfilling meekly, ere thou hence depart,
The 'Woman's Mission' of thy woman's heart."

In addressing social and home workers, we have hitherto supposed them to occupy distinct "niches" in society,—their work to be fully defined,—and their hearts cheered by love and appreciation. Something more, however, is wanted to fill up the picture. There is a class yet unspoken to—hearts yet unreached. There are those who have no home, or but a solitary one, whose portion in society is peculiarly one of neglect and insignificance. Take woman in all her phases, with one exception, and she is surrounded by a halo of interest and sympathy. The young and the lovely are ever the beloved.

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Many rise up around the wife and the mother, and call her blessed. The aged woman is a link to other times, and her words are listened to with reverence and respect. But from the single woman *d'une certaine âge*, are withheld the interest which it is the foible of her sex to covet, and the sympathy which she more than ever requires. Behind her are the sorrows and severings of the past, before her the waste and desolate places from whence the sunshine has faded.

There are several characteristics, or rather, *pronenesses*, in woman, that render her peculiarly alive to the trials of such a position. Prone to make idols and to find them clay, her first real conviction that there are no idols that will not break, severs her heart from its refuges like a nestless bird. Prone, too, to faint and fail when the trial is petty and ignoble, she suffers acutely from the daily darts of neglect and ridicule, and from the departure of those attractions which once procured attention and consideration. Because she can no longer pour forth the full affluence of prized affection, she takes it for granted that she need bestow no love, and cultivate no sympathy. Much has been said and written upon this subject, and yet we have sometimes felt as if women thus isolated, were still left tossing in a rudderless vessel on a strange ocean,—told, indeed, that land lay near, but unable to distinguish it,—informed of the work before them, without having it clearly defined,—bid

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to be of good cheer, without the tenderness and sympathy which the intricacies of their position peculiarly demand. Our intention is, simply, to offer a few practical and suggestive hints to single women, how they may best put their shoulder to the wheel—their hearts to the work set before them, thus becoming "God's operatives," instead of spending money for that which is not bread, and labour for that which satisfieth not.

For this work, apparently so solitary, many of the elements of social and home work are required. The single woman must, more than any other, struggle against the law of self, for her toil is not for the near and the dear; it may not be met with love, and may fail in calling forth affection; it is for those, only connected with her by the wide, though unseen, family tie, which makes all her brothers and her sisters. Whenever a single woman resolutely devotes herself to the service of God in all its parts, she must become fully assured of her own position—of its strength, its dignity, and its advantages. She must remember that it is her portion,—spoken of by the Apostle with respect and admiration,—to serve the Lord "without carefulness." She must take to herself the encouragement, that even the solitary and the unappreciated has more weight in the social economy of the times than she has hitherto dreamed of; and that though her place and her influence may be as unmarked as the dew of the forest, or as the star of

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the galaxy, yet, if she fulfil not her mission, there will be a diminution of the strength and the light of society.

The mission of the single woman is, in a great measure, to her own sex. There is a reproach hanging over it which she alone can take away. God has bestowed upon woman independent gifts and graces wherewith she may bring glory to Him. Forming so large a portion of society, it would have been inconsistent with His tender wisdom, had He left woman, when independent of man, a useless cipher, a discontented and objectless being. To look attentively upon society, however, it might be supposed that marriage is the great end of life, and that the unmarried have failed in the great mission intended for them. Their name and position are considered legitimate objects of raillery and ridicule, to escape from which many a woman is driven to attempt to "establish herself in life," as it is called—equally degrading, whether successful or the reverse. Whenever a single woman so lives as to rebut these calumnies and disprove this necessity, she is doing a great work; when she is seen to be loved, and occupied, and happy, and respected, she is encouraging her sisterhood to be so likewise. She is a practical warning against the yoke of joyless and uncompanionable marriage, hastily assumed to escape from a position which she has proved capable of being a joyful and useful one. She is an example of the

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needlessness of entering those conventual establishments, half-way between England and Rome, where women, fleeing from their single responsibilities, may set themselves where God has not set them—in families—or, weary of social insignificance, may place themselves upon a pinnacle.

Another portion of social work belongs peculiarly to the "old maid." It is hers to redeem her sisters from the imputation of being peculiarly guilty of "idle words," harsh judgments, and a proverbially strict *surveillance* over others. The heart that does not go out in love, will not feed upon itself alone, it will unlovingly press upon those around. The thoughts that do not perform their holy mission of meditating good for others, will become receptacles of envy, hatred, and uncharitableness—the words that are not sanctified, will speak but of gossip and censoriousness. Every time, therefore, that the single woman, both by precept and example, attempts to stem and sweeten the waters of Marah, and to lead her sisters to perform the gentle charities of life, and to speak of things of beauty, and joy, and goodness, instead of the exaggerated story—the evil motive taken from their own hearts,* imputed and discussed, she is doing no ignoble work for God: she is proving "that there is nothing on earth more tender than a woman's heart when it is the abode of piety."

As we have hinted above, "Thought Work," as it

* "Self-knowledge makes us uncharitable."—MASON.

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may be designated, must be combined with the single women's social vocation. That it *is* a work of no small moment, we may gather from the beautiful prayer of David the king. "O Lord God of Abraham, Isaac, and of Israel, our fathers, keep this for ever in the imagination of the thoughts of the heart of thy people, and prepare their heart unto thee."—1 Chron. xxix. 18. This is indeed a work for all classes, and for all individuals; but upon whom can it be so forcibly urged as upon those who are emphatically "dwellers alone," and to whom, for long periods, the inner world of thought is their principal scene of action? There is a beautiful and well-known hymn, each verse of which commences with these words,—"Speak gently;" but "*Think* gently," would go more to the root of the evil. How frequently the lonely one brooding over an imaginary insult, or a pardonable omission, instead of being

> "To her neighbours' faults a little blind,
> To her neighbours' virtues ever kind,"

becomes additionally clear-sighted to their faults, and peculiarly blinded to her own! How often the train of exaggerated and censorious thought goes on, gathering material like a snowball, till the heart, which might be warm with love to friend, sister, and neighbour, is cold and hard—the very antipodes to the heart which "thinketh no evil, and is not easily provoked!" Till the chambers of thought are purified, warmed, and illuminated by the Holy Spirit,

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the outward conversation will never be becoming the Gospel, which is so often highly professed; and the thoughtful solitude will never become "the seat of perfect peace," as the Spanish soldiers beautifully called the solitary mountain amidst the South American Llanos, "Paramo de la Suma Paz."

Another work to which the single woman may specially devote herself, and to which she is often proverbially disinclined, is the exercise of love and influence over the young. Pleasant it is to see an "old maid," with perchance no external attraction but the sunshine of a gentle smile, no accomplishment but the music of a sweet tongue, amusing and instructing happy groups of children. Her influence over the youthful of her own sex may be strong; nay, we could imagine it to be, in some respects, greater than the maternal. Frequently, the mother, exhausted by the wear and tear of commonplace cares, or absorbed with the interests of her happy home, forgets the struggles and sorrows of her early life; she is disposed to view lightly the youthful trials of others, and to expect them to be as transient as her own now appear in her eyes. But the woman of no present ties remembers vividly the difficulties and dangers of the past; she can recall every rock and current in the stream of life, and none are better fitted to speak words of hope and warning to the dejected and the struggling. She can take them back to sorrows borne, and disappointments blessed;

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she can tell how great the "boon of suffering" is to woman; she can point to the refuge for the lonely, to the rest for the weary, so that, although none on earth can call her by the sweet name of mother, yet she may say in heaven, "Behold here I am, and the children which Thou hast given me." It is beautiful to see the young and the old, the home-dweller and the isolated, thus clinging to each other, creating a new beauty, and a new affection, and embellishing each other, like the sere leaves and the green of the beechen wood.

Nor is this all,—the single woman has yet another mission. She has a great debt to assist in paying. Although father and brother may be silent in the grave, and the lover of her youth may have passed from her, yet has she an influence to wield over man, a power to "help" him in his career. To use the words of a modern writer:—"'Il n'est pas bon que l'homme soit seul; je lui ferai un aide semblable à lui.' Ceci s'applique à toute femme, non à la femme mariée seulement. Car Eve n'apparait pas seulement ici comme la femme du premier homme, mais encore comme la première femme; et solidaire de tout son sexe, ainsi qu'Adam l'est du nôtre, elle en offre dans sa personne le type et une sorte de miniature. . . . . Honteuse d'elle-même et jalouse de se réhabiliter, la femme ne vivra plus que pour réparer le mal qu'elle a fait à l'homme, en lui prodiguant, avec les consolations qui peuvent adoucir l'amertume présente du

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péché, les avertissements qui peuvent en prévenir l'amertume éternelle."*

It may be objected that this influence requires the aids of youth, beauty, talents, and self-confidence, which the middle-aged and the solitary do not possess. Not so: it requires but the moral youth and beauty bestowed by the graces of the Spirit; it requires but an earnest recognition of the feminine mission and obligation, and of the implanted strength which can alone give a sanctified influence. None are more ready than men to recognise the beauty and dignity of woman's character, thus shining from amidst the shadows of solitude and obscurity—none more ready to be benefited by its influence.

It is obvious that the single woman, with few household cares and family anxieties, and with small restriction upon her time, must have a large amount of special and visible work in her power. The poor, the sick, the afflicted, and the ignorant, have manifest claims upon her leisure; but upon this branch of the subject we shall not enlarge, as it comes under the head of "Special Work" for all. To perform the mission of single women aright, an especial portion of the joy of the Lord is needful, for a higher purpose than that of smoothing their own path and alleviating their own sorrows. It is not enough that the old maid's home shall be one of comfort and content,—it is of real importance to the circle around each,

* "La Femme; Deux discours par Adolphe Monod."

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that they who are experiencing the undefined sadness of departing youth, should learn to "sing as in the days of their youth;"* and that they whose affections have been torn or left lonely by the adverse circumstances of life, should be seen rejoicing because they have fixed them upon the home and the affections above.

* Hosea ii 15.

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VII.

WAITING WORK.

"Wait on the Lord; be of good courage, and He shall strengthen thine heart: wait, I say, on the Lord."—PSALM xxvii. 14.

"God doth not need
Either man's work, or his own gifts; who best
Bear his mild yoke, they serve him best; his state
Is kingly; thousands at his bidding speed,
And post o'er land and ocean without rest;
They also serve who only stand and wait."
MILTON'S SONNETS.

IT is always easier to act than to wait; it is pleasanter to the natural heart, full of its own energy and excitement, to do a great action than a small one, or apparently to do nothing at all. The men of war, who, like the war-horse scented the battle afar off, found it a hard service to walk around Jericho seven times seven. It must have been difficult for the Israelites, on the banks of the Red Sea, to stand still and see the salvation of God, instead of rushing upon the hosts of Pharaoh. The Syrian captain was wroth when with no pain or trouble he had but to wash in the waters of Jordan. Yet the one species of service is as needful as the other. The strength and courage will come to those only who have waited

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for the good time of their Giver; and most of the Lord's servants who are called to work that is seen, have gone through a course of waiting discipline, often unsuspected and unseen.

Dear, anxious, somewhat impatient believer, to whom we have before addressed a few homely words, bear with us yet a little, while we suggest that another part of the work which you have to do at present may be a waiting work. You need such discipline far more than the sinless angels, who yet stand and wait, joyfully and unrepiningly, and in so doing equally serve their Master. You require to be taught humility. If you were an open, active labourer in the Lord's vineyard, observed of all observers, you would perhaps become puffed up with pride, and you would say, "Oh, well done!" as it happened to Bernard, into whose ear, even while preaching, Satan whispered "Bene fecisti Bernarde." So you must needs learn that all manner of active service can go on upon the earth without your aid,—that God has workers in abundance ready for His purposes; and that when He chooses you to work for Him, it is because of His good pleasure and tenderness, not because He cannot do without you. You require to be taught patience. All eagerness and excitement, you would rush forward impatient to be employed, and perform the Lord's work in a hurried and imperfect manner, peculiarly distasteful to Him who loveth to "have all things done in order;" so He

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wills a period of patient quiet waiting and restraint for you. You require to be taught child-like submission to your Father's will. Perhaps you have attained to so much of it as to lay your hand upon your mouth, and your mouth in the dust, during times of chastening; and in difficulty and perplexity, you can cry unhesitatingly, "My Father, my Father, thou art the guide of my youth!" But you are not equally submissive when you desire to do active work for God, and He will not allow it. You feel as if it were a duty to be impatient, and so God must check this unchild-like spirit, and bring you into subjection to His will in *all* things. Then, above all, you require to wait for greater degrees of that sanctification which is to fit you for active work. "If a man therefore purge himself from these, he shall be a vessel unto honour, sanctified, and meet for the Master's use, and prepared unto every good work." A blessed way of spending the waiting time,—thus uniting the warfare work,—scarcely less blessed than the sinless services of the angels, who have never required to yearn and struggle after holiness.

Frequently the "waiting" is in the chamber of sickness—in "the fires" of bodily suffering. Very trying is it to the Christian, when life and activity have been throbbing high in his heart, to be laid upon a bed of languishing; when he has been longing to prove that he is a living branch of the fruitful Vine to feel himself but a dry twig,—a withered

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leaf. Even more trying than a season of decided and dangerous illness, is the protracted time of languor, and weakness, and weariness,—when usefulness seems forbidden by the jarred and thrilling nerves, giving greater intensity to the irritating self-condemnation, and injurious struggles to escape from the hand of the Lord, so common in such a position. Be still, oh weak, and nervous, and restless sufferer! consider that the Lord Jesus knoweth thy frame, and remembereth that thou art dust, for He "was made like unto His brethren." Others may weary of thy incapacity, but He never does; others may forget their own past sufferings, but every pang is still fresh in His memory.

"Thou who didst sit on Jacob's well
The weary hour of noon;
The languid pulses thou canst tell,
The nerveless spirit tune."

He is proving what of faith and submission is in thy heart; and oh, disappoint Him not! let Him find a patient spirit amidst the languor and nervousness, a waiting heart upon the wearisome couch.

Frequently, also, the "waiting" is amidst the depths of heavy chastening and sore bereavement. When the heart has been well-nigh broken with its yearning for a removed prop and fibre, it is best that the time of healing and binding up should be spent "alone with Jesus," sitting at His feet and waiting for His strength. It is not needful, however, that the waiting season in any of these cases should be

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altogether inactive. The patience and sympathy displayed to others—the meek submission, "Though He slay me, yet will I trust in Him,"—the evident though speechless desire for the glory of God, may all bring forth fruit unto everlasting life.

> "Count each affliction, whether light or grave,
> God's messenger sent down to thee. Do thou
> With courtesy receive him. . . . . Grief should be,
> Like joy, majestic, equable, sedate—
> Confirming, cleansing, raising, making free,
> Strong to consume small troubles; to commend
> Great thoughts, grave thoughts, thoughts lasting to the end."*

During this season there must also be a good hope within you. Without hope you cannot wait and cannot war; without hope you will sink down contented with your inaction. Cultivate then, an earnest, loving, active principle of hope, which is in itself work. It will be the salt that preserves the grace of patience from degenerating into indolence. It will be the light that illumines what might else be a dark place. Hope against hope, wait against weariness, and you will yet be chosen and meet for active work here, and for the inheritance hereafter.

* Aubrey de Vere.

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VIII.

PREPARATORY WORK.

"Prepare thy work without, and make it fit for thyself in the field; and afterwards build thine house."—PROV. xxiv. 27.

. . . "All the means of action—
The shapeless masses—the materials,
Lie everywhere about us. What we need
Is the celestial fire to change the flint
Into transparent crystal, bright and clear."
LONGFELLOW.

LICHENS and mosses and decayed leaves are needful to prepare a soil for the trees of the forest; so they who are to be called to some special work, are often led by a way that they know not, to some special preparation; and work that may seem unnecessary and unimportant, proves to be the under soil from whence the fruitful tree is to spring up. We knew a lady who had her mind much turned to the study of German. In her case it seemed a waste of time, and was met with some opposition and discouragement. Still she persevered, and it was not till after she had conquered the difficulties of her favourite language, that an unthought of door was opened, and she became the wife of a missionary to the Jews in Germany. Without the probability of so pro-

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minent a leading of Providence, there are many things that may be cultivated by the Christian in the waiting interval, which he will find useful as auxiliaries when called into active service. Knowledge of all kinds comes under this head. History, languages, logic, mathematics, and the physical sciences, may all be useful in interesting and influencing the young,—in enabling us to "give a reason for the hope that is in us," and in confuting the sophistries of those who, destitute of this "good hope," strive to destroy it in others. Researches into the hidden works of God, as well as into those which clothe the earth with beauty, awakening praise and admiration of their Creator in ourselves, fill up many an idle hour, and create many a busy and blessed thought in the minds of others,—while the well-stored memory,—the cultivated taste,—the quick observation,—the keen discrimination into heart and character, if not concealed in the folded napkin, may take their honourable place as part of the prepared material, from which are to be fashioned the tools of the vineyard and the weapons of the armory.

The Christian, therefore, who prays for a blessing upon his studies, and who earnestly desires to consecrate every talent, need not fear that he is wasting time when he is solving the mathematical problem,—when he is tracing the physical laws of the storm, and the glacier, the flood, and the geyser,—when he is classifying the fronds of the fern, and grouping the

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stamens of the flower,—when he is learning the languages of the earth, and numbering the stars of the heavens. Although he may not for a time be able to see the ways and means, yet if his preparatory work be done in faith, nothing doubting, it will yet be turned to good account in the service of God. Only let him take heed that his work degenerate not into self-seeking and self-applause; let him watch for every opportunity of bringing therewith glory to God, and let him remember that without prayer, such things have been, and may be again, as idols in the way. "Apply and rely" is the only safe motto.

Literary work is not always preparatory only, it may even when of very humble kind be important work for God. Is there nothing, however small, that you can do with your pen and your knowledge? Is there no little tract to be written? Is there no homely volume which might reach some hearts and find entrance into some homes? Is there no translation which might give to a good thought wings like a bird to fly from its own land and its own tongue? Remember the brief yet comprehensive advice which Sir William Jones received from his mother, "TRY." Search and see for yourselves what you can do. "She hath done what she could," is world-wide encouragement. Avoid the false humility of slothful self-depreciation on the one hand; and the presumption of self-dependent knowledge on the other.

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Work for God and not for yourself, and the preparatory work will soon be found to assume its distinct place in the vineyard of God. Most of our readers are acquainted with the Memoirs of Mary Jane Graham, a remarkable example of sanctified genius, and attainments. The following "Prayer before study" was found among her papers after her death, and it seems so applicable to our subject, that we are tempted to transcribe it. No preparatory study will answer its end without a similar dedication, and dependence upon Divine teaching.

"I desire to thank thee, my God and Father in Christ Jesus, for this and every other opportunity of improvement which Thou hast given me! Enable me to receive it with thanksgiving, and sanctify it to me by the Word of God and prayer. Oh let me know nothing but Jesus Christ and Him crucified; and other things *just so far* as may be for my good and thy glory, and *no farther*. I would mourn before Thee, the base ingratitude with which I have hitherto abused my time and talents by loving thy gifts more than Thee, and seeking myself, not Thee in them. Now I bring all my things to Thee; for they are not mine but thine own. Take that *accursed thing self out of them all*, and condescend to use them for thy glory. . . . Holy Lord God the Spirit! who dividest unto every man severally as thou wilt, *bless such of my studies, and in such a degree*, as may be most to thy glory. If it be thy will, prepare me by

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them for the work to which I desire thou wouldst call and separate me. I commit this work to which I would devote myself into thy hands. Prosper it or not as Thou seest good. . . . Even so, Holy Spirit, for the sake of Thy great mercies in Christ Jesus, to whom, with Thee and the Father, be all the honour, all the praise, and all the glory, now and for ever.—AMEN."

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IX.

DESULTORY WORK.

"Here a little, and there a little."—Is. xxviii. 10.
"Who hath despised the day of small things?"—Zech. iv. 10.

"A spark is a molecule of matter, yet may it kindle the world:
Vast is the mighty ocean, but drops have made it vast.
Despise not thou a small thing, either for evil or for good;
Commit thy trifles unto God, for to Him nothing is trivial;
And it is but the littleness of men that seeth no greatness in trifles.
All things are infinite in parts, and the moral is as the material,
Neither is anything vast, but it is compacted of atoms.
. . . . If pestilence stalk through the land, ye say, this is God's doing.
Is it not also His doing, when an aphis creepeth on a rosebud?
. . . . A thing is great or little only to a mortal's thinking,
And happy and wise is the man to whose thought existeth not a trifle."
Martin Tupper.

During the waiting season, while God withholds active work from the believer, He often gives little services to do for Him, which we venture to class under the head of Desultory Work,—work that may happen one day, and not another, "here a little, and there a little;" and which is often left undone, just because it *is* desultory, and apparently so small in its results. Many, however, are now in heaven who would never have known the way there had it not been for the religious book lent by a neighbour; or the persuasive letter penned in a distant land; or the awakening sermon listened to at the entreaty of

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a Christian friend; or the tract found in a railway station; or the short, sudden, but heaven-heard and heaven-answered prayer; or the timely word spoken by the way-side; or the hymn lovingly taught to the little child; or the striking anecdote treasured up and repeated; or the pointed text of Scripture that went into the heart sharpened as a two-edged sword.

The very crumbs of work that fall from the Master's hand,—the fragments that remain from what He gives His strong ones,—the "corners of time" snatched from the more secular work of every day, ought to be treasured by the Christian. They whose time is much at the disposal of others, or who are much in the habit of travelling from place to place, and therefore peculiarly fitted for a "wayside witnessing for Christ," (as it is called in an admirable little manual for travellers,*) need to consider deeply the importance of seizing all opportunities for desultory work. How well it would be if each in going through the world were to remember what the old writer said of life;—that it consisted of two heaps, a large one of sorrow, and a small one of happiness, and whoever carried the very smallest atom from the one to the other, did God a service; much more those who are instrumental in any way in leading or helping one precious soul from the pit of eternal misery, to the home of eternal joy. Let us take heed, then, to be

* A Word for the Way; or, Hints to Travellers and Tourists.

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faithful in the smallest things, or how can we expect to rule over ten cities?—(Luke xix. 17.) Let us watch over the little cloud, from which, though no larger than a man's hand, great showers of blessing may be poured down. Let us nurture the tiny seed, which may spring up into the branching tree; for though our words and deeds may seem slight and powerless things, yet

> "No act falls fruitless; none can tell
> How vast its power may be,
> Nor what results unfolded dwell
> Within it silently."

Like the rain drop of a million years ago, whose fossil steps are traced in the sandstone, so will the smallest of our actions leave traces behind for good or evil—if not visible in time—yet clearly visible in Eternity.

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X.

PRAISING WORK.

"Thou shalt rejoice in every good thing which the Lord thy God hath given unto thee."—DEUT. xxvi. 11.

"For what shall I praise thee, my God and my King,
For what blessings the tribute of gratitude bring?
For the spirits which heightened my days of delight,
And the slumbers that fell on my pillow by night?
For this I should praise thee; but if only for this,
I should leave half untold the donation of bliss.
I thank thee for sickness, and sorrow, and care,
For the thorns I have gathered, the anguish I bear,
For nights of anxiety, watchings, and tears,
A present of pain, a perspective of fears.
I praise thee, I bless thee, my King and my God,
For the good and the evil thy hand hath bestowed."

"A cheerful expecter of the best, hath a fountain of joy within him; Ask for good and have it; for thy Friend would see thee happy."

MARTIN TUPPER.

LIKE the disagreeable Christian, the gloomy Christian is an anomaly in grace. What a sad spectacle! a Christian who makes the young feel old, the old feel older, the sad feel sadder,—who confirms the worldly in their worldliness! Christians, however, are never gloomy because they are too religious, as the world alleges, but because they are not religious enough. That is a striking combination in 2 Tim. iii. 2, "*unthankful,—unholy;*" and it will ever be

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found that the more thankfulness, the more holiness, the more happiness. Rise up, then, oh believer! from your despondency; emerge from the dark shadow; do no more dishonour to your joy-loving Lord. Your heart ought to be as the glad welling fount in the midst of the fresh green grass. Let this rejoicing, fertilizing work be yours; it is the portion of the vineyard most neglected by the Lord's labourers, and yet it is of exceeding value, for "he that offereth praise glorifieth God." An eloquent modern writer has spoken to us of "the duty of delight,"* and it is a duty peculiarly appropriate to the Christian, upon whom all rich gifts and sweet influences are showered by a reconciled Father. Beautiful are the white and crimson clouds that "lie cradled near the setting sun;" joyous the lark's melody, that riseth on the wings of the morning from the earth to the heavens; lovely the deep blue shadows cast by the golden sunlight; fresh and fragrant the flower of the valley, the green leaf of the forest; soothing the ripple-music of the river, and the chiming of the sea upon the shore. Go forth, then, amongst all that is rich and beautiful in nature, and thank Him, the beloved Son, by whom every bright, and lovely,

* "They tell us often to meditate in the closet, but they send us not, like Isaac, into the fields at even; they dwell on the duty of self-denial, but they exhibit not the duty of delight. . . . It is not possible for a Christian man to walk across so much as a rood of the natural earth, with mind unagitated and rightly poised, without receiving strength and hope from some stone, leaf, flower, or sound, nor without a sense of a dew falling upon him out of the sky."—MODERN PAINTERS.

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and melodious thing was created. Go forth, also, amongst the treasures of art,—the forms of sculptured beauty,—the harmonies of music,—the rich colouring of the life-like canvass,—the "marble letters and granite pages" of old stately architecture, and lift up your heart in praise to Him who hath put wisdom into the hearts of the wise-hearted, like unto the wisdom of Bezaleel and Aholiab.—(Ex. xxxi. 1-11.) Go forth, also, amongst those whom God hath given to love you and to be beloved, and for every soul-thrilling glance, for every kindly sympathy and tender word, for all "sweet counsel," and precious unity, thank Him without whose love all earthly sympathy would have been but a name, all earthly tenderness would have been but as the foolishness of idolatry. Go back in memory to the days of "long ago,"—recall the wind tempered to the shorn lamb,—the strong wave of temptation breasted,—the hurtful thing, to which your soul clung, removed out of your path,—the right way chosen for you, instead of the wrong way which you had chosen for yourself,—the measure of affliction meted out which you required,—the friends selected whom your soul needed,—the breathing times granted which your tried and struggling spirit yearned for;—oh, thank your God for it all. He it is who has been your guide through the waste howling wilderness, and the brightener of all green places with His smile. Go deep within the chambers of your soul;

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see there the bright hope smiling, and the light shining, and the new heart struggling, and the old sins staggering and falling; listen there to the voice which whispers all tender things of the love "unspeakable;" behold there the holy and adorned temple, rising stone by stone on the ruins of the chambers of imagery; meditate upon the bright, sinless, victorious future, upon the palm and crown which you shall cast at the feet of the Saviour, upon the new song which you shall sing to the slain Lamb, who *so* loved your soul even unto the death; and then thank Him, though breathlessly and voicelessly, for the great things He has done for you, who have done such small things for Him.

There is a beautiful old legend or "parable," which Lord Lindsay quotes in "Christian Art," under the head of Christian Mythology. "Beyonde the sea was a noble ladie, on whose house alleway the sone shone on the day, and on the nyghte the mone. Of this many men mervayled. Atte last the fame of this come to the Byshop, a worthy man; ande he wente for to see here, hopyng that she was of grete penaunce in clothinge, or in mete, or in othere thinges. And when he come, he saw here alleway mery ande glede. The Bishope saide, 'Dame, what ete ye?' She answeride and saide, that dyverse metes and delicate. Then he asked if she vsed the hayre? She sayde, 'Nay.' After this the Byshope mervaylede, that Gode wolde shew so grete mervaylle for such a

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woman. And when he hade taken his leve of the ladie, ande was gone his way, he thought he wolde aske here more of anothere thinge, and wente againe to here and said, 'Love ye not meikle Jhesu Criste?' She said, 'Yis, I love hyme, for he is alle my love; for when I thinke on his sweetnesse, I may not withhold myself for gladnesse and myrthe that I ever fele in hyme.'"

Some hearts are by nature full of false sentiment and morbid feeling. They shrink from being happy, as if it were uninteresting and commonplace, and, strange as it may appear, they greatly prefer being miserable; they delight in being the heroes, or more frequently the heroines of interest and sympathy from others, and of their own day-dreams of romance; and this strong tendency is often seen even after the heart is renewed. Others are afraid of being happy, lest, as they say, they should suffer for it after, as if God grudged His creatures happiness, and took hard compensation for their enjoyments! Instead, therefore, of leaving to-morrow as well as to-day in the keeping of their wise God, they darken the present with the shadows of the future, and die the many deaths of the coward. Others are afraid of being happy, for a different reason. They look so much to themselves and their sins, and so little to Christ and His righteousness, that they dare not be happy and assured Christians, lest they may be, or may seem to be presumptuous. Such melancholy temperaments

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forget that the more they joy in God, the more cause for joy He will give them; that the more they praise Him for strength, the more strength they will receive; that the more they thank Him even for the wish to conquer temptation, the more He will stand by them, and cause them to triumph for His name's sake. They forget that God's nature is a joyful one; that the element in which He lives is one of joy; and that when He gave men a new nature, it was part of His own joyful one. They forget that the showing forth of God's praise will be a work and a witness for Him, in the midst of a joyless and thankless generation. There was a world of significance in the answer of the half imbecile Christian who was asked by men of wisdom and experience, how it was that he rejoiced more than they? "Just because I am nothing, and you are something;

> I'm a poor sinner and nothing at all,
> And Jesus Christ is all in all."

If the trusting single-hearted Christian is not happy, who dares to be? If the possessor of a rich demesne may not rejoice in his prospects, how can they rejoice, who have no abiding treasures laid up in earth or heaven? Of whom ought it to be said but of the Christian, that he is "a man of cheerful yesterdays, and confident to-morrows?"

"Resolve, Christian," says Gurnall, "to enclose some time from all worldly suitors, wherein thou mayest every day, if possible, at least take a view of

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the most remarkable occurrences that have passed between God and thee. First ask thy soul what takings it hath had that day, what mercies heaven hath sent in to thee; and do not when thou hast asked the question, like Pilate, go out; but stay till thy soul has made report of God's gracious dealings with thee. Yea, while thou art viewing these fresh mercies, telling over this new coin, hot out of the mint of God's bounty, ancient mercies they will come crowding in upon thee, and call for a place in thy thoughts, and tell thee what God hath done for thee months and years ago. . . . There is a great treasure of mercy always in the Christian's hands, and conscience is oft calling the Christian to take the account, and see what God has done for him; but seldom it is he can find time to tell his mercies over; and is it any wonder that such should go behind hand in their spiritual estate, who take no more notice what the gracious dealings of God are with them? How can he be thankful that seldom thinks of what he receives?"

"Bless the Lord then, oh my soul, and forget not all His benefits." Let not one be struck from thy memory—let not gratitude for the old mercies be absorbed in the enjoyment of the new. Neither let the work be a selfish one. Praise God for His tender dealing with others; and if there be any whose tongues utter no words of praise, but whose language is, "Who shall shew us any good?" teach them to

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distinguish and appreciate the good already given—the sweet drops mingled in their cup; be to them a mouth of praise—shed upon them a gleam of your rejoicing—follow the example of Him who was light amidst darkness, and be

"A sunshine in the shady place."

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XI.

SPECIAL WORK.

"But this I say, He which soweth sparingly shall reap also sparingly; and he which soweth bountifully shall reap also bountifully. Every man according as he purposeth in his heart, so let him give; not grudgingly, or of necessity; for God loveth a cheerful giver. And God is able to make all grace abound towards you; that ye, always having all sufficiency in all things, may abound to every good work." —2 Cor. ix. 6-8.

"Sow in the morn thy seed,
At eve hold not thy hand;
To doubt and fear give thou no heed,
Broad cast it o'er the land.

"Beside all waters sow,
The high-way furrows stock,
Drop it where thorns and thistles grow,
Scatter it on the rock.

"Thou canst not toil in vain,
Cold, heat, and moist, and dry,
Shall foster and mature the grain
For garners in the sky.

"And duly shall appear
In beauty, verdure, strength,
The tender blade, the stalk, the ear,
And the full corn at length."

James Montgomery.

Our purpose has indeed failed, if we have led one soul to remain satisfied with small duties and easy work, instead of pressing on to higher degrees of service. We believe, however, that those who are most zealous in performing the humblest labours of the

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vineyard, will ever be found most able and desirous, when the Master calls, of going forth early to sow the seed, to plant the vine, to twine the young tendril, to watch the tender grape and the budding forth of the green pomegranates. It must ever be remembered, that the most patient, cheerful, childlike submission to the trial of being debarred from the active work for which the soul longs, is quite compatible with a watching for every opening, a seizing of every opportunity, a knocking at every door, along with earnest prayer, to be permitted to employ every faculty in the service of God. When the Christian is brought to this willing, yet waiting spirit, he will not remain long on the threshold of the vineyard; for soon will the joyful summons be heard, "Enter in, the Master hath need of thee." He hath need of thee perhaps in his nurseries and his sheepfolds. Sabbath after Sabbath there are little tender plants and wandering branches to be trained into trees of the Lord's planting, that He may be glorified, or little wayward lambs to be guided to the Good Shepherd, and laid upon His steady shoulders. He hath need of thee, perhaps, in His mission-house, to encourage the bearers of glad tidings to far off kindreds and tongues, to give to them of your substance, to aid them by your activity. He hath need of thee, perhaps, in His prisons; He wants to be visited by thee, to receive a cup of cold water from thee,—to have the captive led to Him who leadeth captivity captive,

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and breaketh asunder stronger chains than those of brass and iron. He hath need of thee, perhaps, in the lane and the alley, the cellar and the garret. He hath silver and gold to give out of thy abundance to the hungry and thirsty and wretched. He hath kind words to speak by thee, and tender love to bestow on those who have known no kindness, who have imagined no love, and for whose souls no man hath cared. He hath need, perchance, of thy pen and thy intellect; there are scorners to be rebuked, and sophists to be confuted, in "thoughts that breathe, and words that burn." He demands of thee, perhaps, the talent of thy rank and influence, to be a light shining and burning in the midst of thick darkness, to be a missionary in high places, where the accredited message, where the tabard of the herald, would find no entrance. Go forth, then, rejoicing to thy work; linger not a step, for the way is short; lose not an hour, for the night cometh when no man can work.

It has been said by one who once appeared "almost a Christian," "Let him who gropes painfully in darkness or uncertain light, and prays vehemently that the dawn may ripen unto day, lay this other precept well to heart, which to me was of invaluable service: *Do the duty which lies nearest thee*, which thou knowest to be a duty, thy second duty will already have become clearer."* And it is true,

* Carlyle's Sartor Resartus.

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that while Christians work not *to be* saved, but because they *are* saved, yet there is much spiritual benefit to be obtained for our own souls by active work for God. He that doeth His will shall know of the doctrine.—John vii. 17. Let the Christian who is mourning over his ignorance, his doubts, his want of experience, become a diligent worker, and he will find that knowledge will flow in upon his soul like a river, and that he shall be satisfied with the riches of understanding that are in Christ Jesus. "He that watereth others, shall be watered also himself." Perhaps the believer is enveloped in thick, dark clouds, or pursued by fiery darts of temptation, till his soul is ready to despair. Let him work, let him strain every nerve in the service of his Master, and he will forget *not* his sinfulness, *not* his weakness, but he will forget his despair—he will have no time for his unbelief; there will be no room for Satan's temptations in his busy hands. While watering others, his own soul will become as a watered garden, filled with all manner of spices, and pleasant fruits, and lovely flowers. It is true that at first he will not bear the seed-basket so joyfully as those who are basking in the sunshine of God's countenance. There will be weeping because of weariness, weeping because of weakness, weeping because of unworthiness; so much the better. The precious seed will rise up all the goodlier and the greener, because of the spring showers before the summer sunshine.—Ps. cxxvi. 5, 6.

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In this work the instruments placed in our hands by the Father and the Master, are of no uncertain edge; and sharpened by the Holy Spirit, there is no fear of their operation being inefficient, for God himself works not only in us, and by us, but more gracious still, He works *with* us,*—while the holy angels are our helpers and fellow-servants.† Confidently, then, let us take courage and be strong in the Lord. Joyfully let us plant in all soils and sow beside all waters. Let us scatter truths, which, like the seeds of the bread-fruit tree, may take root and flourish, after being long tossed on the stormy waters.

Before concluding this chapter, we must allude to a subject prominently brought forward in the fascinating periodical literature of the day. We mean the injudicious, ill-timed, and ostentatious performance of the duties belonging to "special work," by the class often satirically characterized as "good ladies." The sketches of character to which we refer‡ —though broadly caricatured—contain much painful and useful truth. Extensively read, however, by those only whose prejudices need no such stimulant—whose perceptions of the existing evil are more vivid than of the attempted good,—and unread by those to whom they might speak a word of warning, they are more likely to prove injurious than beneficial. That the evil rebuked and satirized is a real and

* Mark xvi. 20. † Rev. xxii. 9.
‡ Bleak House, by Charles Dickens, Esq.

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extensive one, is, nevertheless, abundantly evident. Twofold in its aspect, it is not only hurtful to those immediately affected by it, but the eddying circles reach many who are thus led to look sceptically upon the real good, and to conclude that active outward work is incompatible with the domestic calling. It is certain that this special activity ceases to be the appointed work for any, where it necessarily interferes with home duties. The exciting and conspicuous doings of the committee-room—the missionary collectorship—the secretary's desk—the abolitionist's appeal—the prison visitation, cannot be considered the vocation of those who have husbands requiring in vain their sympathy and companionship at home—who have neglected children to be taught and attracted to religion—whose servants are sick, or idle, or unruly—whose next-door dwellers stand in need of unostentatious but efficient aid. The falseness of this position for a Christian worker, is frequently aggravated by an almost unconscious mixture of selfishness and parade—the silver is tarnished with dross—the wine mixed with water. Not only is the domestic routine neglected, but the important principle contained in the command—"Let not thy left hand know what thy right hand doeth," is forgotten and disobeyed. Religious newsmongers and philanthropic gossips, are made acquainted with the doings both of the right hand and the left; while the oneness of aim, the holiness, dignity, and symmetry of God's

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service, are marred by injudicious and partial performance, and debased by self-exaltation.

While deploring the evil, however, let us not mistake the true remedy. While doing the one set of duties, let not the other be left undone. There is no reason why wives and mothers should be debarred from "the special work" for which they may have a peculiar talent. Only, let their primary duties be performed in their due order; let them seek a double portion of grace, that they may be gifted with single hearts, steadfast hands, and wise heads. Let them make it more clearly evident that they are united to that "Green Fir Tree,"—that Living Vine—whose branches shall never drop their blossoms, nor shed their fruit at untimely seasons. Let the activity that is *for* Christ be *from* Christ, and it will never be undue and misplaced; let them deny themselves in *making time*—snatching it from their indolence and their amusements; let them deny themselves, by retiring as much as is possible from the applause and the excitement frequently attendant upon their good works; but, above all, let them deny themselves in these very works, so as cheerfully to give up the missionary meeting—the school superintendence—the prison or district rounds, when there is a prior claim to humbler work at home. Let not the stigma be cast upon the religious profession, of working everywhere save in its own sphere, but let it be shewn to the world, that both may be accomplished by those

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who, weak and foolish and sinful in themselves, receive strength and wisdom and righteousness from Him in whom dwelleth all fulness; that, like the work of the Apostles, which began, but tarried not at Jerusalem, the work begun at home may spread itself well and wisely in ever-widening circles.

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XII.

PRAYING WORK.

"Thus saith the Lord, the Holy One of Israel, and his Maker, Ask me of things to come concerning my sons, and concerning the work of my hands command ye me."—ISAIAH xlv. 11.

"If ye abide in me, and my words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you."—JOHN xv. 7.

"Lord, what a change within us one short hour
Spent in Thy presence will prevail to make;
What heavy burdens from our bosoms take;
What parched grounds refresh as with a shower!
We kneel, and all around us seems to lower;
We rise, and all—the distant and the near—
Stands forth, in sunny outline, brave and clear.
We kneel; how weak! We rise; how full of power!
Why, therefore, should we do ourselves this wrong;
Or others, that we are not always strong;
That we are ever overborne with care,
That we should ever weak or heartless be,
Anxious or troubled, when with us is prayer,
And joy, and strength, and courage are with Thee?"

TRENCH.

PRAYER is the life of all work. Without prayer, work would be as useless as the suit of armour without the living man within it,—or as the richly-carved casket from whence the gems had been stolen,—or as the scabbard apart from the sharpened steel. Without prayer, "every-day work" would be but a dull round of uncongenial tasks. Without prayer, "social work" would degenerate into worldliness on the one

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hand, or weariness of the flesh and spirit upon the other. Without prayer, "home work" would be but another form of self-intrenchment. Without prayer, "warfare" weapons would dim with rust, and there would be a turning back in the day of battle.—Ps. lxxviii. 9. Without prayer, "waiting work" would become sloth and self-indulgence; "preparatory work" would turn into intellectual idolatry, and "desultory work" would be aimless and spasmodic. Without prayer, there could be no "praising work," or it would be but the effusion of the natural heart, praising nature but not God, admiring beauty but not its Creator. Without prayer, "special work" would be nought but the "splendid sins" of the self-righteous, and the self-justifying. Without prayer, the missionary in his hut beneath the banyans would be weak as other men. Without prayer, the Jew of Tarsus would have been but a blind leader of the blind Gentiles. Without prayer, the strengthening angel would not have appeared to the Agonized of Gethsemane.

Nor is prayer the medium only through which we receive spiritual blessings and consolations,—an opening of the heavens, through which, like the Captives of Chebar, we may see visions of God;—nor is it only the salt which preserves from corruption,—the throb of life in the living work; it is in itself work—the noblest, the highest, the most successful; for it moves God himself to work; it commands His

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hand! This wonderful work is not limited in its sphere; it is suited to all situations and all capacities. Many there are who cannot work what man calls work, but none there are who cannot pray. The lonely dweller among the mountains, with no neighbours save the eagles of the corrie, with no listeners save the winds of the heavens, can pray; and the dry bones of the far-off world may become a living army through his lonely prayers. The pale silent sufferer on the couch of pain can pray; and by her voiceless petitions may be hastened the outpouring of the Spirit, the coming of the Kingdom. Far away may we be from those whom we love better than life; powerless may we be to guide them, to watch over them, to comfort them; but we can rouse up for them an untiring Watcher, an unchanging Lover, an unfailing Comforter—we can pray. Agonizing may be our fears for precious souls hurrying on the broad road to destruction—our words fall unheeded, our anxieties are laughed to scorn, our presence is avoided. Can we do nothing? We can pray! We can call down upon them the mighty Spirit, the resistless Pleader; we can bring the Saviour to them, though they will not go to the Saviour. An old author writing upon intercessory prayer, tells the following story:—"It was a law amongst the Romans, when in the field, that any person found near the emperor's tent at night should suffer death. One night a soldier was found holding in his hand a

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petition. The sentence was about to be executed, when the emperor called out—'If the petition is for himself, let him die; if for another, spare his life.' It was found to be for two of his fellow-soldiers who had incurred the displeasure of their monarch, and the lives of all three were saved. Was this office of charity so pleasing to an earthly prince, as to induce him to dispense with a law for its sake? Oh, how acceptable, then, to our merciful God to intercede for our fellow-sinners!"

It might seem at first sight as if this work were an easy one, and that the slothful heart might take refuge in it when averse to any other; but it is not so, either as work for ourselves or others. It is easy, indeed, to offer the prayers of the hypocrite and the formalist, morning and evening, at noon, and at midnight, sending words up to heaven, while the thoughts remain on the earth.* It is easy to stand in the weekly prayer meeting, or kneel in the daily service, and to wander the while contentedly upon the mountains of vanity. It is easy to ask a hasty blessing for a friend, or for a work, and then forget to expect the answer—to press the petition. But it is very hard to pray so that Satan shall tremble.† It is hard to pray so that God by His pledged word must answer us. It is hard to pray while seemingly

* "My words fly up, my thoughts remain below,
Words without thoughts can ne'er to heaven go."

† "For Satan trembles when he sees
The weakest saint upon his knees."

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the heavens are of brass, and there is neither sign nor voice, and yet to take no denial. It is hard to pray and to be resigned to the answer, even to the breaking of idols, the crucifying of affections. It is hard to pray for "everything,"—to be "careful for nothing," and to realize that in no other way can we obtain daily strength, wisdom, and success. It is hard to pray in all sincerity, as true men speaking to Him who is the truth. The sin of Ananias and Sapphira is oft repeated in prayer,—we keep something back,—we spare some darling treasure,—we make the reservation, "Lord, not yet." There was once a little child who understood somewhat of the nature of sincere prayer; he refused to pray one evening; his mother reproved him, but to no purpose—he would not pray; he was asked his reason, and weeping bitterly, he said, "My sparrow dee'd last night, and I couldna say 'Thy will be done.'"—Yes! it is hard to pray, but we make it harder. We come as subjects to a king, but we come not as children to a Father,—we come as slaves to an overseer, but we come not as brethren to an Elder Brother. We are afraid of irreverence in prayer; or we think there is little need of telling God what He knows already; or we dread being selfish in our petitions, and so we do not come to particulars in prayer. We confess our sin in a general way, but we do not detail its sufferings, its temptations, and its aggravations. We pray for our friends, and we implore

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the Divine guidance upon our way, but we do not specify times and seasons, circumstances, sorrows, idols, fears, names, cares, and reasons; and thus we have so few answers to prayer—so many heavy and unrelieved burdens, often made up of trifles, like rocks of microscopic shells.

Yes! it is hard to pray; but, blessed be God, we are not left to pray alone. There is one who will put within us the courage of sons,—the confidence of daughters; One who is the Teacher of prayer, loving to teach, and loving the taught, and who is the helper of our infirmities; One who ever liveth to present our petitions, that they may be answered for His own sake. Oh, then, Christian, pray and work, work and pray! Prayer is the beginning of work, prayer is the end of work, prayer is work itself.

"Were not my watchings another's care,
Long since I had wearied and ceased from prayer;
Watchman of Israel, watch over me,
Pity if wearied and faint I be,
Wake me with new and reviving power,
Say to me, Canst thou not watch one hour?"

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XIII.

HOMELY HINTS ABOUT WORK.

"Let all things be done in order."—1 Cor. xiv. 40.

"Do what thou dost, as if the earth were heaven,
And that thy last day were the judgment day:
When all's done, nothing's done."

KINGSLEY.

"A wise man scorneth nothing, be it never so small or homely,
For he knoweth not the secret laws that may bind it to great effects."

MARTIN TUPPER.

THE law of order requires to be duly combined with the law of work, else we shall walk at haphazard, hindering our own usefulness, and irritating the feelings of others. There may be much diligence, and faith, and zeal, without order, but there can be only partial success; nor without it can there be a thorough spirit of obedience, for it is one of the commands of God, "Let all things be done in order." It appears to be a thing of easy attainment, belonging to the essentially commonplace and uninteresting elements of work; hence is it so frequently neglected, and any admonitions on the subject generally received with weariness, if not contempt. Those, however, who have known the sadness of failure in their work, without any apparent cause,—unless it be the want of due

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regularity and design,—will not disdain to listen to a few brief and homely words, and to such we say—

Be methodical!—The very idea of "living by rule" is frightful to many, especially to those who pique themselves on possessing something of "genius," which they consider incompatible with method. Now, if genius has accomplished much in the world without method, doubtless it would have accomplished much more with it; while those who have neither genius nor method, will find themselves but in a melancholy plight. When we rise in the morning to the light and the work of a new day,—unless we have some rules of action,—unless we know what we have to do, and when it is to be done,—unless we have the hours parcelled out in some measure so that we need not waste large intervals in arranging and discussing, we run great risk of having our duties ill balanced,—giving undue space to the work that we like, and crushing into a corner the work that we do not like. While we allot, as far as possible, the different duties for the different hours, it is well to leave some but partially filled, to meet the emergencies of unexpected claims,—reserving some lighter employments for these "corners of time." The lesson that we may learn from the following resolution of Mrs. Fletcher of Madely, as recorded in her diary, will be found useful by those who for the first time are attempting to cultivate method.—"I will endeavour to lay out my time by rule, that I may know each

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hour what ought to be done; nevertheless I will cheerfully submit to have these rules broken or overturned, whenever the providence of God thinks fit so to do."

Be punctual!—Punctuality is essential to method, but we make a distinction between the two, because with some degree of growing method, as regards our own duties, we may yet be heedless regarding the work and the method of others. Time is a gift, and if we choose to undervalue and mislay our own portion, we certainly have no right to appropriate what belongs to those around us. Yet when we forget to keep an appointment,—when we arrive an hour too late for the work to be done in concert with others, —we have not only defrauded God of His service, but we have robbed our neighbours of hours that might have been usefully occupied. In some cases this is tantamount to the crime of stealing silver and gold,—for to many time is money. Charlotte Elizabeth said that by the want of punctuality in her friends interrupting her literary work, she had lost hundreds of pounds; still more is this true in the case of artisans and tradespeople, to whom want of punctuality is positive injustice; and yet how little is this social sin watched and striven and prayed against!

Be thorough!—Do not aim at more than you have strength or opportunity for; but what you attempt, do well: it is better to do one duty thoroughly, than

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half a dozen superficially; and as it is not the object of God that you should perform a certain number of services, but that you should so enter into the spirit of them as to glorify Him, and obtain from each its full amount of benefit for others, you will frustrate God's plan by their perfunctory performance. There is nothing too small to be done thoroughly,—no work so insignificant that we can say, "It is of no consequence how I do it." This thorough spirit will prevent procrastination,—there will be no putting off till to-morrow the duty to be done, or the difficulty to be grappled with, which each day will grow more distasteful and more burdensome; it will also prevent the opposite tendency to undue haste, and the anticipation of future duty, when we ought to be absorbed in the present. Let there be also a combination of earnestness and reality so needful in all work, without which we shall walk through the vineyard as "in a vain show,"—without which our hearts will be far away in dreams, while our hands are mechanically employed.

Be wise!—Too often the usefulness of Christians is marred by a native want of wisdom. With the best intentions, they say and do just what is calculated to injure, instead of to profit, and they lay hold of the Apostolic injunction—"Be instant!" as an excuse for being very much oftener "out of season than in season." Sometimes the defect proceeds from an overweening confidence in their own wisdom,

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which makes them trust to this broken reed to extricate them from perplexities, to uphold in difficult paths, and to solve harassing doubts and fears; therefore God leaves them to these their counsellors, that after doing, saying, and thinking the most unwise things possible, they may become "fools" in their own estimation. The cure for both these cases is so simple and direct, that it need only be stated in these few words of Scripture—"If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him." All that is essential for the obtaining of this true wisdom, is to be ever bearing in mind our daily, hourly need of it, and ever pleading the full promise of its immediate supply; so that in all sincerity though not with fleshly wisdom, we may walk without erring in the highway of holiness.—(Is. xxxv. 8.)

Be watchful!—Never is the enemy's hand so full of tare-seeds as when he sees the husbandman diligent in the field. Never does the roaring lion go hither and thither more vigilantly seeking for his prey than when the Christian's hands and heart are eagerly and successfully employed. Never does the beacon require to be fed by night, and the watch-tower to be mounted by day more unweariedly, than when the Lord's soldier is at the same time the Lord's workman. Be watchful, then, over your own soul, lest in the unguarded zeal of your occupations the fiery darts of Satan may find entrance—lest, as you

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"are busy here and there," He who must be the strength of your hand and the light of your heart departs from you, (1 Kings xx. 40,) grieved at the unwatchfulness of His servant.

Be consistent!—The Christian is not as the unrecognised architect of the coral atoll and lagoon,—or as the builder of many of earth's proudest fanes; he is identified with his work, whatever it may be, and it will suffer loss, or increase in value according as he walks steadfastly in the ways of the Lord, or is driven hither and thither, as if by a strong wind; one day at work in the vineyard, the next immersed in folly and vanity; one day speaking words of precept, the next day unspeaking them by contrary words of example. God's servant must bear the badge of his service at all times and in all places; that he may be consistent abroad, he is to be consistent at home; that his clothing without may be of wrought gold, like the king's daughter, he strives to be all glorious within. This consistency implies courage, and this courage implies decision. It is only the heart that is brave in the strength of the Lord that dares to walk boldly yet humbly, consistently yet tenderly. It is only the heart that is like a soldier's heart, that heeds not the smoke and the noise of ridicule and reproach. It is only the heart braced with decision that shrinks not from confessing its master, and that when calmly assured of the path of duty, is not careful to answer the arguments of the opposer.

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Upon the tombstone of the Scotch Reformer were written the words, "Here lies he who never feared the face of man;" and had this eulogy been unmerited, limited and unsuccessful would have been his work. When Martin Luther was implored by his friends not to answer to his citation before the Diet of Worms, he exclaimed—"I am called in the name of God to go, and I would go though I were certain to meet as many devils in Worms as there are tiles on the houses." When Paul listened to the prophecies of Agabus on the one hand, and the weeping of his beloved friends on the other, it was Christian decision that prompted the glorious reply—"What mean ye to weep and to break my heart? for I am ready not only to be bound, but also to die at Jerusalem for the name of the Lord Jesus." The heart that is thus enabled by grace to be bravely and decidedly consistent at all times and seasons, and under all circumstances, will find that whereas in the old days of its cowardice and hesitation it was a dwarfish and puny thing, it will now grow in stature and in strength, like the coral polypi which increase in vigour when exposed to the swell of the breakers.

Be straight-forward!—When we do even a little evil that much good may follow, we are turning aside from the straight road, and we countenance a principle which, perhaps, more than any other, has reared its Babel-like front against the simplicity of the truth that is in Jesus. Of all mottoes involving im-

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portant practical and doctrinal results we would have this inscribed over the gates of the Christian Vineyard, "Never do evil that good may come!" whether it be under the name of expediency or policy, or prudence, or Christian wisdom. Though the amount of evil be as small as a tiny acorn, it encloses the germ of a gigantic principle. The straight road is the Christian's road, wherein none can lose their way,—the winding path is but a branch of the Broad Road and beaten track. Like the "living creatures" by the Chaldean river, our feet must be "straight feet;" like them let us endeavour to go "straight forward," turning not aside as we go, but following the Spirit that goes before us. In all work this will be found a safe and simple rule. The duties that must be done clandestinely, cease to be duties. The work that is done under another badge than the Master's will never prosper. The truths that must be rendered palatable by worldly policy will lose their truthfulness, and fail of their effect.

Be patient!—God looks not upon the success, but upon the unwearied arm, the patient heart. The very toiling and rowing in contrary winds, though the rowers apparently do not near the land, is pleasing to Him. The casting the nets into the sea during the long weary night, though finding nothing, is service to the gracious Master. Be patient, therefore, like the husbandman who waits long for the precious seed; it may be that you are

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taken away before the early and latter rain, so that you never see the young stem, the green sheaths, the yellow grain; but in planting the crop you have worked your appointed work. The great object in Christ's vineyard is not to see by sight, but to sow and water by faith. If you measure your work by the work of others, you will grow impatient, they seem to do so much more, and to succeed so much better; but God has given you one kind of work, and one kind of discipline in that work,—to them He has given another, and it belongs not to you to judge which is the more useful, which the more successful. If you are too anxious that the fruit of your work should look well to the world's eye, you will grow impatient speedily; but remember, that the outside may be fair, and the inside bitter dust, like the apples of the doomed city.—Be patient, then, for the ripening of the good fruit of the good tree;—there will be a time when it will appear green and hard to those who look on it in ignorance; but keep it ever nearer to the Sun of righteousness, and soon its beauty will be rich and ripe.

Be spiritually minded!—Never let work of any kind interfere with the times and seasons of devotion, or with the habit of spiritual communion with Him, who is the Father and the Friend, as well as "the great Work-Master." If we neglect to sit at the feet of Jesus, we shall grow careful and troubled about many things,—about the table,—the farm,—

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the merchandise,—about the work that is highest, as well as the work that is lowest; we shall be selling doves in the temple, which, however pure and innocent, must be cast out. If we are to go forth in the Spirit into the outer walks of life, His influence pervading the works of our hands, He must dwell within the temple of our hearts by faith,—He must give us clear and spiritual views of the things that are eternal, that we may place in their right position the things that are temporal.

In concluding these homely hints, we must note some pitfalls in the Lord's vineyard, because of which the deceitful hearts of the vine-dressers may halt and stumble. You may make an idol of your work, dear friend. If you are over-anxious for success,—elated by it when it comes,—desponding when it is withheld; if you refuse to believe that others will rise up in your room, as well or better fitted to carry on the work; if your soul cleaves to it till you are unwilling to hear the summons to your home, to your rest;—then there is reason to fear that you are worshipping the work of your own hands, "bowing down to your own net, and sacrificing to your own drag."*

On the other side, you may be weary,—weary of the labour,—weary of the struggle,—weary of the long slumbering of the seed within the earth; and,

* "To our own nets, ne'er bow we down,
Lest on the eternal shore,
The Angels, while our draughts they own,
Reject us evermore."—KEBLE. Hab. i. 16.

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like the prophet under the juniper tree, (1 Kings xix. 4-8,) you may be ready to say, "It is enough; now, O Lord, take away my life;" but he replies, "Not so; arise, and eat; the journey is long, and the burden is heavy, and the labour is great; but strengthen and refresh thyself in the Lord, and be not weary of well-doing." "Are you not wearying for our heavenly rest?" said Whitefield one day to an old clergyman. "No; certainly not," he replied. "Why not?" was the surprised rejoinder. "Why, my good friend," said the old minister, "if you were to send your servant into the fields to do a certain portion of work for you, and promised to give him rest and refreshment in the evening, what would you say if you found him languid and discontented in the middle of the day, and murmuring, 'Would God it were evening!' would you not bid him be up and doing, and finish his work, and then go home and get the promised rest? Just so does God say to you and me."

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XIV.

REWARD OF WORK.

"Be ye strong, therefore, and let not your hands be weak: for your work shall be rewarded."—2 CHRON. XV. 7.

"Thy works and alms, and all thy good endeavours,
Staid not behind, nor in the grave were trod:
But as Faith pointed with her golden rod,
Followed thee up to joy and bliss for ever.
Love led them on, and Faith, who knew them best,
Thy handmaids, clad them o'er with purple beams,
And azure wings, that up they flew so drest,
And spake the truth of thee on glorious themes
Before the Judge; who thenceforth bid thee rest,
And drink thy fill of pure immortal streams."

MILTON'S SONNETS.

CONSCIOUS as we are of having owed a vast debt which we cannot pay; conscious of having been forgiven that debt fully and freely, the idea of reward for the sin-stained services of the poor debtor, is at first intensely painful, and seems to introduce a lower motive and an unworthy element into our work. Yet we have no right to turn away from a truth so clearly revealed in Scripture. Like all parts of Jehovah's Gospel plan, it is composed of interwoven wisdom and love; for the doctrine of reward of work, when fully understood, only lays the forgiven and the rewarded soul more humbled and more adoring at the feet of his Master. The acceptance of our

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poor broken services so stained by wrong motives, by ignorance and by faithlessness, seems wonderful condescension; but to reward them is like returning good for evil, thus heaping coals of fire on our heads. "Fourscore years," said Polycarp, "have I served God, and found Him a good master;" and this will be the experience of all the Lord's people, who, while often neglecting what they can do, are, even when they have done all, unprofitable servants. God often rewards in this life, by large measures of success—the reaping time will surely come, though it may seem to tarry, and the precious seed sown in tears, will in all certainty be changed into golden sheaves. Frequently He rewards by a fulness of blessing, returned upon the worker's own soul. The heart that is drawn out to the hungry and the afflicted, will be guided and satisfied by the Lord Himself. He that cultivates all social and relative love for the sake of Jesus, will be more and more transformed into His divine and loving image. He that has led a soul to the Truth will know it more convincingly in his own soul. Those who have given their youth to the service of God, will be like the green cedars, for long life and strength, and like the palm tree, that yields clusters of fruit in its old age. But it is not only such rewards that the believer is promised in the Word of God. For all, houses, lands, children, parents, wives, brethren, forsaken for His name's sake, there shall be an hundredfold in the

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everlasting kingdom. For all grief and warfare, there shall be a double of rest and blessedness. For the many souls won to righteousness, there will be crowns of rejoicing, and a radiance like the stars of the firmament. For the food to the hungry,—for the drink to the thirsty,—for the clothes to the naked,—for the consolation to the captive,—for the cup of cold water to the disciple as given to the King himself, there will be an additional joy on the right hand thrones. Even as one star differeth from another star in glory, so will those whose works are as gold and silver, upon the true foundation, differ in brightness and enlargement from those whose "wood, hay, and stubble," must be burnt, though they themselves "are saved as by fire." Oh! how the thought of this stupendous love will prostrate each redeemed one before the rainbow throne! How gratefully the crowns will be cast at the Saviour's feet! How rejoicingly the voices will mingle in the new and adoring song!

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XV.

FUTURE WORK.

"His lord said unto him, Well done, good and faithful servant; thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things: enter thou into the joy of thy lord."—MATT. xxv. 23.

"And his servants shall serve him and see his face."—REV. xxii. 3, 4.

"Thy Master calls thee, good and faithful servant;
Long hast thou served on earth with spirit fervent.
Go hence to yonder temple filled with glory,
There shalt thou praise thy Lord in song and story;
There shalt thou see his face instinct with beauty,
There shalt thou serve with all delightsome duty."

IT has been beautifully but untruly said, that

"All we know of saints above
Is that they sing and that they love."

We know more than this. Though the river is wide, we can see in clear weather something of the scenery on the other side; though the veil is thick, we can catch glimpses of what is passing behind it; though the voices and the music are too distant to be distinctly heard by mortal ears, yet some words, some harmonies, come faintly to us when the Bible opens the door of those glorious but invisible dwellings. We know that the servants of the Master are to serve him and see his face,—we know that it is to be an active service, for they are to serve him resting

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not, day and night, in his temple,—we know that they are to judge, and to rule, and to have power over the nations. We know not, indeed, what manner of service that of the servitors in the upper temple is to be; whether, like the angels, they are to be ministers to the heirs of salvation in other worlds,—whether they are to be watchers and warners of the tempted, the sinning, and the penitent,—whether they are to fly swiftly, bearing the Lord's messages, and rejoicing with those who do rejoice. Into the realms of conjecture we dare not venture; but this we may know, as surely as if we had been caught up into the heavens to see with our own bodily eyes, that among the prepared things of the prepared home, for the prepared people, there will be blessed and congenial service appointed for each, for which all that has gone before of waiting, and longing, and struggling, and working, has been but the preparation,—a service combining indeed, the joyfulness of praise, and the sweetness of rest, but in its very nature possessing the active, useful, and progressive elements of WORK. "Surely the idea is inadmissible that an instrument wrought up at so much expense to a polished fitness for service, is destined to be suspended for ever on the palace walls of heaven, as a glittering bauble no more to make proof of its temper."* Trained in a school, purified in a furnace, loved with a love which the seraphim and cherubim have never known and

* Isaac Taylor's "Natural History of Enthusiasm."

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never needed; instinct with yearnings and strivings after the high, the beautiful, and the immortal, we cannot doubt that the service of the Lord's redeemed, accompanied as it is to be with the sight of that blessed countenance, the veiling of which is the believer's greatest sorrow upon earth, will be yet higher and nobler than the services of the happy and glorious, but unfallen and unpurchased angels.

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XVI.

CONCLUSION.

"Nevertheless they shall be his servants; that they may know my service, and the service of the kingdoms of the countries."—2 CHRON. xii. 8.

. . . . "Christian works are no more than
Animate love and faith, as flowers are the animate spring-tide.
Works do follow us all unto God: these stand and bear witness,
Not what they *seemed*,—but what they *were* only."
THE CHILDREN OF THE LORD'S SUPPER.

IN our progress through this little volume, we have taken it for granted that those who have accompanied us in quest of a few useful hints belong decidedly to the number of those who rejoice in the title of "servants." It is not impossible, however, that these pages may fall into the hands of some who may find the words, duty—work—service, hard and distasteful. There is a sentimental school in the present day, that would fain abolish all these ungraceful words, as they are deemed, and substitute some that are beautiful when joined to the others, but vain and vacant when left to stand by themselves. We hear much of the principle of "love," which is to supplant duty, instead of supporting and adorning it. We have Jehovah revealed to us not as the *personal*

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Master, Father, and Saviour, but as God in everything, and everything as God—the works of His hands transformed into Himself. We have genius, with all its eccentricities and weaknesses, turned into a faith and a worship. We have "earnestness" much lauded and much recommended—not earnestness in truth, but earnestness often in spite of truth; error taken no account of, as long as men are "earnest" in maintaining it. We have æsthetic beauty reared upon an idol's shrine, and all that is "useful" branded, not only as devoid of beauty and elevation, but as debasing to the free and aspiring soul of man. It is little to be wondered at, that men, wrapt in a visionary existence of beauty and perfection, should look with contempt on those who so openly avow themselves to be "servants." What beauty—what merit—what spontaneous grace—what earnest dedication can there be in this menial work? Yet there was one instance of the most devoted love—the most earnest self-sacrifice—the most heroic beauty that the world ever saw, and the prime feature of wonder and praise in that blessed example was, that He made Himself of no reputation, and took upon Him the form of a servant. Since those marvellous days in the elder time, the act of SERVICE has been ennobled and consecrated. The doing the will of a master, the "ministering," instead of being ministered unto, has become work of which neither man nor the spirits that are hovering around us, need to be ashamed.

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In fact, whether recognised or not, service is the universal law. Ay, and though it sound not fit for ears sentimental and polite, we know that those who serve not God, are the servants, nay, the slaves of a hard task-master. Various and plausible are the forms of his unsatisfying—and if the chains be not broken—his eternal servitude. Some are slaves of the fancy—some are slaves of society—some are slaves of the flesh—some are slaves of the mind; and the fetters are not the less ignoble because unconsciously worn—the tasks not less menial because they are suited to the grovelling tastes of the servants—the work is not less essentially laborious, because it is of no avail: "The people labouring in the very fire for very vanity."—Hab. ii. 13. Thus we have a learned and industrious man, of other times, crying out upon his deathbed—"Alas! I have squandered away my life laboriously in doing nothing."*

There is as great a difference in the two services, and the two rewards, as in the two masters. There is as great a difference between the apparent and the real beauty of the work here, as there will be between the beauty and the misery of the two states in eternity. We grant that the beauty of the senses, and the beauty of the feelings, and the beauty of the intellect, and the work to which they lead, surpass infinitely in external graciousness the every-day duty—the heavy cross—the weeping eyes—the

* The learned Grotius. See "The Christian World Unmasked," p. 71.

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weary feet and toiling hands of those who follow Him who was like a root out of a dry ground, without form or comeliness. But the beauty of the one passes away, and where is it, and what remains? The struggles and the scars pass away also, and are no more seen for ever; but there remain on earth the beauty and the grace of good deeds, long after their doers have perished,—like the ancient glass, which, destitute of beauty and colour in its youth, shines forth in the decay of its original substance, resplendent in gorgeous hues. Nor is this all; those who have borne the image of the earthly in so much weariness and infirmity, shall also bear the image of the heavenly—those who have been scorned for the lowliness of their work, shall reign as kings and priests, crowned with diadems of immortal beauty.

So far as we have yet gone, we have contemplated the working believer *as an individual*, in some of his phases of duty towards God, towards himself, and towards his neighbour. There is one aspect of his position, however, which we cannot overlook, luminous as it is with love and beauty. The believer is not only a part of Christ,—he is a part of Christ's Church. We hear much of "The Church" in the present day,—too much, and yet not enough. We hear of it as connected with the priesthood,—one saying, "I am of Paul," and another, "I am of Apollos." We hear of it as connected with the walls and the screens,—the organs and the surplices.

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We hear of it as connected with sharp contentions and unbrotherly divisions, but we hear little of it as the spiritual body of Christ,—as the great company of the redeemed, both in earth and in heaven. And so it comes to pass, that among infidels, the word is a scorn and a scoff, and among believers it is used shrinkingly, and approved doubtingly. Let us not, however, allow the blessed and beautiful title to be monopolized by those who know not its true beauty and value. The Church is not composed of quarrelsome children, who must have all things their own way, and no other, as might often be imagined,—neither is it composed of self-complacent architects of their own barriers, and forgers of their own bolts and bars, but of tried and tempted, repenting and pardoned men and women, who have duties to perform for each other, and for God, *as members of a spiritual church.* Nor is a forced union in external form needful to the proper division and success of this work. It is *not* needful,—it is *not* the essence of strength, it is, or would be, the essence of very weakness; for, as it has been well said, "An intolerant sect, is a sect in fear."* Christ did not die to give His people strength and safety by means of uniformity,—He died to give them the strength of unity,—unity with Him,—unity with each other,—unity in their great work. God who knows all the intricacies and needs, and varied constitutions of man's spirit,

* Isaac Taylor's "Spiritual Christianity."

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far better than man knows them himself, has not instituted in His Word one form of worship, with secular penalties to guard, and persecution to punish. He has clearly set forth the doctrines to be taught in all Churches,—the blood of the Cross,—the regeneration of the Holy Ghost,—the adoption into the Father's family,—the grateful services to be rendered because of these great benefits, and He has left His children free to worship Him in all non-essentials, according to their individual characters and necessities, and their varied views of scriptural obligation,—giving His Son to save and His Spirit to sanctify, and His will to be done in and by all Churches,—a blessed fact to which the great company before the throne are at this moment bearing joyful testimony. Besides the individual obligations and responsibility which lie upon each labourer in the Lord's vineyard, he has therefore another equally important charge to keep as a member of the Congregation of the Faithful. He has to do with each and all, as they belong or do not belong to the true Church. If as far as man's judgment is of avail in "trying the spirits," he can decide that those who are within the range of his influence, are spiritual "Churchmen," in deed and in truth, then are they to be cheered, to be cherished, to be visited, even as in so doing, "Ye do it unto ME." If, on the contrary, it appears as if their names were yet wanting to the records of the Church, then is all social, domestic, prayerful, and special work to be exercised,

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that these souls may be brought within the spiritual pale.

No circumstances can interfere with this *ecclesiastical responsibility.* It may be,—to use Mr. Ruskin's* beautiful simile,—that the Christian may take some of the sheep of the fold for stones on the far mountain side, but let him draw nearer to them, and he will soon see the true sheeplike form and demeanour. It may be that those whom he believes to be his brethren, may turn away and say, "Stand by; I belong to a church that is holier than thine," and the natural heart may retort and say, "I am more liberal than thou, and I can hold no communion with a bigot." Dream not, O believer, that thou art thus loosed from thy responsibilities; thy work in watching and convincing that erring but sincere heart, is but laid before thee the clearer.

The present day, with its past warnings and its future perils, is not wanting in special and startling arguments for the urgency of work, and the necessity of warfare. When the spiritual and CATHOLIC CHURCH (we shrink not from the name) is threatened with foes without, and traitors within, and injudicious friends around and about, it is time that she should be seen as an illuminated city set on an hill,—that she should be known as a Church engaged in full work—work of all kinds and all degrees, but more especially in the urgent one of plucking souls from the burning,

* Notes on the Construction of Sheepfolds.

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so much the more as she sees the day approaching. When the signs of the times seem to give forth audible utterances—when it is possible that the fire for the martyr, as well as the dungeon and galley for the confessor, may be near at hand, it is well that the Church should carefully foster and seek to maintain, in all hearts bound up within her, the courage of the martyr, and the faith of the confessor. If there never has been a day, however, of such startling calls, and such glorious opportunity, there never has been one of such glaring obstacle. Satan, knowing that his time is short, is putting forth all his energies "in great wrath;" he has sown dragon's teeth in the vineyard, and thrown shells of fire into the camp.

Let us glance for a moment at the scene around us. Life is a bivouac*—the world a broad plain of strife, and there is a day approaching, even the battle of the great day of God Almighty. Slowly but surely the hosts of the foe are mustering. You may see the broad flag of Rome, and the less conspicuous ensign of Anglo-Catholicism, and the black banner of infidelity, and the puny pennons of false prophets and false Christs. But where are the opposing legions? where is the phalanx of the Lord's people? Alas, there is a division in the camp; brother will not march forward with brother; their eyes are

* "On the world's broad field of battle,
In the bivouac of life,
Be not like dumb driven cattle,
Be ye heroes in the strife!"—LONGFELLOW.

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fixed, *not* upon the God above them, *not* upon the foe before them, but upon the colours of the ensigns, upon the forms of the pennons around them! What, then, is to be done? Let all who are upon the Lord's side unite their forces,—let the flag of each wave bravely and broadly above them,—let their own churches and altars become daily more precious to their hearts, even as the child loves its father's birth-place, its mother's home;—only let each heart have love and sympathy for its fellow-heart,—let each brother prize his brother's worship, though it is not his own,—let the tables of communion be as free to those who shew themselves to be God's people, as the wells of water and green palm-trees in God's wilderness,—let the prayer be special and earnest, faithful and unwearied, for an outpouring of the Lord's Spirit, as a spirit of Catholic love and unity,—let each man, and woman, and child, add their weight and their influence, though it be but as the grain of sand, as the widow's mite, against the iniquity of sectarianism—*then* shall we go forth a united company from every tongue, and people, and kindred, and nation,—a victorious band of brothers, with our elder Brother at the head,—the Captain of the Lord's host!

We need not wonder that schemes of this kind are so often pronounced Utopian, and so often fail, as they certainly do, when we remember the unbelief that prevails upon the subject—few believing that,

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though difficult, it is *not* impossible, for "all things are possible with God," and "we can do *all* things through Christ strengthening us,"—very few hopefully and earnestly praying to God to do this thing for us that we cannot do for ourselves, and still fewer realizing such a spiritual unity as the very best and the very highest. For we maintain that a unity of spirit between two of different Churches is far more honouring to God, and far more convincing to the world, than the same degree of unity between two of the same Church. The latter *may* be the result of fear, or policy, or self-interest, or brick and mortar combination; the former is a free, wide, noble, rejoicing sympathy, shewing to the world whence it came, and whom it imitates, looking up and away from the little things that are below to the great things that are above,—loving because Christ loves, pardoning because Christ has pardoned, the one and the other,—sitting beside each other on earth, because they are to sit together in heaven,—working hand to hand and heart to heart, because they expect the same summons to the marriage supper of the Glorious Lamb.

We conclude this little volume with the following striking quotation:—

"My particular calling being a peculiar and distinct station, wherein I am bound to be serviceable to my country and family, and wherein also I have this privilege, that I may further my general calling, if I

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mind it out of conscience to the Lord, or in obedience to His Word; I wish, in general, that I may never cross the wise providence of my God (in the government of the world) by neglecting it or thinking lightly of it, but since I am listed under the Captain of my salvation, may serve Him faithfully, not only in general as a soldier, but also in that place or office to which He hath chosen and called me. I wish, in particular, that 'what my hand findeth to do, I may do it with all my might;' that I may be of the number of them that spend themselves with labour, and not of them who waste with rust and laziness; my diligence herein is some help against the temptations of the devil. The sluggard's heart is like his field, overgrown with weeds. Lord, let me rather wear out with work than consume (like a garment laid by with moths) for want of use! . . . . . I desire that I may be so sensible that good things here below come from the Most High God, and the success of my labours dependeth more on His providence than my diligence, that I may never in a morning open my shop, or lift up a tool, (as my trade is,) before I have opened my heart and lifted up my soul to my God for His blessing upon my endeavours. All creatures in the hands of my God are as dead tools in the hands of a living workman, by whose force and influence alone they act. . . . . In a word, I wish that I may, like the wise merchant, sell all I have to buy the pearl of great price; the gold tried

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in the fire, that I may be rich; the white raiment, that I may be clothed, and drive such a constant trade with my God in the other world—hearing from thence, and sending thither—that when the King of Terrors shall give me a writ of ease from my particular calling, I may die in the Lord, rest from my labours, and have my works following me, 'through free grace, into an exceeding and eternal weight of glory.' AMEN."—*Swinnock's Christian Man's Calling.* A.D. 1662.

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SECOND SERIES.

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PREFACE

The Author acknowledges with gratitude, that the reception given to the first volume of her little work, has been such as greatly to encourage her in sending out a second. She feels, however, that some apology is due for dealing with subjects, the thorough treatment of which, requires an amount of experience and qualification to which she can lay no claim. Her purpose has been throughout entirely suggestive; and her object will be in no small measure gained, if she succeed in leading some to think upon topics, which, often handled in theory, are too much neglected in practice.

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WORK.

I.

LITTLE CHILDREN'S WORK.

"Even a child is known by his doings, whether his work be pure, and whether it be right."—Prov. xx. 11.

Mother,—to thy heart are given
Rich and precious gifts from Heaven,
Not to be thine own for ever,
Not to save thee hard endeavour;
Souls for thee to guide and cherish,
Teach, that so they may not perish;
Hearts and hands to train untiring,
For Work that God is *now* requiring.

Of all the beautiful things in this world of beauty, children are surely the most beautiful: "The poetry of the world, the fresh flowers of our hearths and homes; little conjurors with their natural magic, evoking by their spells, what delights and enriches all ranks."* Not only, however, are they things of love and beauty, but like the flowers which are their prototypes, they are of sweet and pleasant use. Few hearts but must have been cheered by their joyousness,—few minds that have not been taught by their

* Binney's "Is it possible to make the Best of both Worlds?"

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questionings. In the verse of Scripture which heads this chapter, we have a beautiful indication of the fact, that each little child, careless and frolicking as it may appear to be on the pathway of life, has yet high and holy functions to perform,—a little spot of the vineyard to occupy which is tenderly overlooked by its Master, and a power of shewing to others the purity and rectitude of its work. Solemn as this thought is to us, it is not often so to the young, who are generally unconscious workers, like the birds, the bees, and the blossoms;—but it ought to startle and arouse those to whom is entrusted the responsibility of making or marring these little instruments of God. Few sights are so awfully significant as what is familiarly termed "a spoiled child,"—"spoiled" for its present work of joyfully serving its Creator,—"spoiled" for a future living and loving life,—"spoiled" for the purposes of a blessed eternity. Most of the mothers who thus act, start back shocked and indignant at the idea of the effects being permanent. By some strange process of self-delusion, they allow themselves to believe that a mysterious change will take place,—that the ill-tempered and wilful girl will become the gentle and unselfish woman, and that the idle and lawless boy will be a useful worker in his future day. Such changes have been, and may be again in God's mercy; but even if so, His immediate design has been frustrated by those to whom He lent the treasure. The *little child* whom

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Jesus would fain have loved is practically detained from Him,—the kingdom of Heaven is robbed of part of its essential element.* It has been well said, "that excessive indulgence to others, especially to children, is only self-indulgence under an alias."† Oh then, self-indulgent mothers, cease from your selfishness! There is sorrow enough in store for your children; do not assist in laying up for them more than they can bear. Do not,—while God is wishing to guide them early heavenward, be yourselves the means of leading them, even for a time, in the direction of Hell. Do not so train them that they cannot do the work which is already given them to do, and which God will require at your hands as well as at theirs.

Others there are whose dearest wish is to have their little ones consecrated to God. They pray and labour in faith, looking forward to the time when their children will become workers in their Master's vineyard;—but even they may forget that a mother's work is not only one of faith, but may also be one of sight,—that it is as easy for the Saviour to change the heart of the little child whom He has taken in His arms and blessed, as to renew it after years of folly and alienation. When the seed is sown the promise of the harvest is "in due time," but how often there is a sad and weary, though at last a suc-

* "For of such is the kingdom of Heaven."—MARK x. 14.

† "Guesses at Truth," 1st Series.

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cessful watch through many an untimely season! It cannot be God's fault that there are so few converted children, for He loves to give a speedy answer,—He loves to give a timely harvest;—but there are many mighty works which He cannot do because of unbelief. Mothers! it is well that ye should hope and watch and teach—it is well that ye should pray, and that your children should see you pray. A Christian philosopher was but a few weeks ago conversing with an eminent French *savant*, gone since then to his long home.* The latter expressed his difficulty in understanding the existence of God, "le Dieu de vos philosophes." His friend directed him to "le Dieu des Chrétiens." "'Ah! oui!' me dit il, 'c'est de celui de ma mere, de celui devant lequel elle éprouvait toujours tant de douceur à s'agenouiller.' Il n'ajouta plus rien. Son cœur avait parlé; cette fois il avait compris!" But it is not enough thus to pray. See to it that ye also *believe* and *expect*,—see to it that ye look for great things *now*, for the infancy of your children may be, and ought to be their accepted time, and their day of salvation. Never could there be a more acceptable office for the blood of Jesus than to cleanse those little ones of whom He said, "Suffer them to come unto me." Never could the Holy Spirit's work be more appropriate than when building up a temple in the hearts

* See a notice of M. Arago by M. Auguste de la Rive of Geneva, in "Cosmos, a French Journal of science.

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of the "little children," whom He teaches sinners to resemble. God has Himself given a great reason for early conversion. The very words, "a pious child," excite apprehension in many minds that it is—in ordinary phraseology—"too good to live;" even when rejoiced in as safe, it is trembled over as doomed. But God speaks of the "work of the child,"—God tells us of His converted little ones, that "they do the will of their Father:"—God's highest motive for your children being *saved*, is not that they may be *safe*, but that they may be His own lovely and loving servants.

We are so accustomed to influence children by loving, blaming, and teaching them, that we are apt to forget the strong influence which in their turn belongs to the little ones of whom is the kingdom of Heaven; we forget to train them so that this influence may be exerted for *immediate* good. It is often objected, that in the present day children are made too conscious agents,—that in the efforts of an infant teacher or little missionary collector, there is much more gratification of childish vanity than honest effort, and that thus the simplicity of childhood is tarnished, and its weakness and needs kept out of view. This may be so, if the fact of their having a work to do *for others* only, is too prominently brought forward. But let the little child be impressed with the knowledge that it has work to do *for God*, even if only like the dew-drop that refreshes

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the stately rose, or the little songster that makes merry the gloomy forest. Let it be taught that its own heart is a large field of work,—that a watch over its besetting sins is the first step of its service to God,—and we believe that far from making children vain, it will deepen the conviction of their own littleness, and God's greatness and condescension. That was a beautiful remark of the heathen child,—"God is great enough to reign in the wide heavens, and small enough to live in my heart."

Precious and delightsome as children are, they are not like rare exotics or costly gems; they are here, and there, and everywhere,—springing up like the wayside grasses, and are like the stars of the heaven for multitude. There are few hearts that cannot either in their own homes, or in the homes of others, rejoice in youthful sunshine,—who cannot study the ways, and help the infirmities of little children,—

> "Not too good,
> For human nature's daily food,
> For transient sorrows, simple wiles,
> Praise, blame, love, kisses, tears and smiles."
>
> WORDSWORTH.

Most of our readers, therefore, will understand that the difficulty of appeal and realization is very forcibly felt in going through a child's daily history. We find there, fear of some supposed danger,—pain caused by some little accident,—weariness of constraint,—despondency at tiny difficulties,—naughtiness, shewing, like the serpent's trail in Paradise,

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mingled with that bright light upon brow and lips, that sweet music of words and laughter, which make even our heavier hearts feel childlike for the time. In looking back upon the day's alternations, we wonder how little effect we have had in equalizing the temperature. We have spoken of the love of God, but the moment's fear, or pain, or difficulty, has been too strong to realize it; we have appealed to their love for us, but the moment's temptation or passion has swept it away; we have spoken of God's anger, but it has only made the little one shrink and shudder. Thus we have been apt to sink down in discouragement, forgetting the wayward and rebellious day's history of ourselves, "children of a larger growth," and perhaps judging hardly of

"The young young children, oh my sisters!"

It is clear that something more tangible is needed to impress and bring home exhortation. Those who have had the management of the young know well the effect of *employment*, in alleviating sorrows and subduing waywardness. "Who will do this for me?" "I," and "I," and "I," will be cheerfully answered by little voices that had previously been choked by sobs. Now, when met by this difficulty of daily appeal and realization, let us carry the principle of action to its highest extent. Let the child have a strong and vigorous motive for learning that spelling lesson, for resisting that piece of gluttony, for help-

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ing that helpless little sister, for giving the kiss of forgiveness to that offending playmate. Let it be distinctly and forcibly understood, that here is something to be done for God—that He is watching to see how the trial is borne, how the temptation is resisted, how the service is performed; for trifling as they may all appear to us, they are not so, either to the child or to God. This plan may at first fail, but if consistently, solemnly, yet cheerfully carried out, we believe that in few cases will it fail of ultimate success; for it is God's will that these little ones should be thus trained to an early and joyful service for Him.

Much honour is put upon children on earth. Not only is praise ordained out of the mouths of babes and sucklings, but our Lord says, "Whosoever receiveth one such little child in my name, receiveth ME." Much honour is put upon them in Heaven, where,—as we are told for a motive in our conduct towards them,—they always see the face of God.* Let us not then wonder at the influence which in their simplicity they exert over the proudest intellect. One day a little girl of four years old was playing unobserved in a corner of the room, when it was remarked of a gentleman who had just gone out, that he was an infidel. "What is an infidel, mama?" said little Mary. Her mother gave her an explanation suited to her age. She said nothing,

* Matt. xviii. 10.

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but was very thoughtful. The next day the gentleman, to whom she was much attached, returned, and, to his astonishment, his little friend refused to speak to him, and shrank from his usual caresses. He inquired the reason, and she answered firmly, "Because you are an infidel." "What is an infidel?" he said, to try her. "One who does not believe in God, heaven, or hell." The arrow had sped, and he went home *to think*. The result was his conversion to Christianity. Truly that child's mother must have had a thankful heart. A case of this kind may be an exception; for it is not often that the young are the visible teachers of the old, but many and wonderful are the trains of influence which unconsciously they spread around,—many the flowers and the pleasant fruits that spring up from the seeds which they waft into the breezy air. We remember being much struck by a little story, shewing that "a word fitly spoken," or, to use the expressive Hebrew reading given in the margin, "a word spoken upon wheels," even by the weakest and youngest, is precious as gold and silver.* One day a boy was tormenting a kitten, when his little sister said to him with tearful eyes, "Oh, Philip, don't do that,—it is God's kitten." The word of the little one was not lost; it was set upon wheels. Philip left off tormenting the kitten, but many serious thoughts were awakened regarding the creatures that he had before considered his own property. "God's kitten

* Prov. xxv. 11.

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—God's creature, for He made it." It was a new idea. The next day, on his way to school, he met one of his companions who was beating unmercifully a poor starved-looking dog. Philip ran up to him, and almost unconsciously using his sister's words, he said, "Don't, don't, it is God's creature." The boy looked abashed, and explained that the dog had stolen his breakfast. "Never mind," said Philip, "I will give you mine, which I have in my basket;" and sitting down together, the little boy's anger was soon forgotten. Again had a word been unconsciously set upon wheels. Two passers by heard Philip's words, one a young man in prosperous business in the neighbouring town,—the other a dirty ragged being, who, in consequence of his intemperate habits, had that morning been dismissed by his employer, and was now going home sullen and despairing. "God's creature!" said the poor forlorn one,—and it was a new idea to him also;—"if I too belong to God, He will take care of me, though no one else will." Just then he came to a public-house, where he had been in the habit of drowning his miseries, and then staggering home to inflict new ones on his wife and children. He stopped,—the temptation was strong; but the new idea was stronger,—"I am God's creature,"—and he passed on. His wife was astonished to see him sober, and still more when he burst into tears, declaring that he was a ruined man, but that he was determined to give up drinking and

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to trust in God. At that moment a knock was heard at the door, and the gentleman came in to whom we have before alluded. He too had been rebuked by the boy's words for the scorn and loathing which he had felt to the miserable object before him. "God's creature! therefore entitled to help and pity." We need not detail the words of hope and comfort, the promise and the performance of active assistance, which in a short time lifted up the poor man's head, and made him one of God's thankful and joyful "creatures." It would be well for us all, old and young, to remember, that our words and actions, ay, and our thoughts also, are set upon never-stopping wheels, rolling on and on into the pathway of eternity.

One great and obvious effect of a complete realization of a child's influence and work, would be the encouragement and stirring up of mothers in *their* work, every detail of which would then be animated by the sweet hope of making ready little workers for God's immediate service, while the solemn words of the Spirit, "Even thy child is known by its doings," would give an object and importance to each new habit and occupation. It would remedy the want of balance which is often to be seen in the training of children; those whose thoughts are already wrapped up in their homes have their affections morbidly cherished, and the hearts that are inclined to wander have their external sympathies alone drawn out,

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thus isolating the energies which require to be combined. It would also open the eyes of partiality to see those little foxes spoiling the tender grapes,* which, though visible to others, are often hid from maternal vision.

When carefully brought up children are loving and obedient, and inclined to much that is good, we often see little blemishes, which interfering seriously with their influence, are yet overlooked by a mother, because they are so dutiful and obedient to *her*. They are, perhaps, so absorbed by their home-happiness,—so occupied by the pleasure or the duty of the moment, that they have no room for other thoughts, and meet the playmate or the friend with the cold look and absent heart, which may thus grow into a wounding and alienating habit. Or perhaps there is the tell-tale look in quest of admiration, resulting from the fond praise and laugh at home, of witty sayings, and clever mimicry. Or we see the expression of disappointed vanity when left unnoticed, while others are brought forward and admired. Because everything else is so fair, and these specks are so small in degree, they are either unobserved, or considered necessary parts of all childish nature. Yes, mother, yet they are not the less symptoms of the old heart which must be taken away—they are not the less germs of the self-occupied and self-sufficient spirit of later years, not the less will they

* Cant. ii. 15.

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prevent the child's work from being "pure and right," and if not checked, the plague spot of selfishness, though now scarcely visible, will spread out into all its frightful proportions. O mothers! teach your children to work for God by loving others much and themselves little. Teach them that to break that touchingly suitable command, "Little children, love one another," is as much a breach of God's law, as a theft or a falsehood, for in His sight,

"A small unkindness is a great offence."

Teach them that without love, ardent and glowing in their hearts, their work for the Lord will not be accepted. Teach them *not* to put on artificial and worldly manners, but to struggle *to feel* a love and to practise a self-denial which will make ready courtesy and thoughtfulness a truth and a pleasure,—which will enlarge their hearts, till they contain many a thought and feeling beyond their own immediate pleasures. In that book which has so strangely moved all hearts in all lands, drawing tears whence tears had rarely fallen, we have this essential element of the Missionary Spirit exquisitely delineated. "'Oh, Topsy, poor child, *I* love you,' said Eva, with a sudden burst of feeling, laying her little thin white hand on Topsy's shoulder; 'I love you, because you hav'nt had any father, or mother, or friends,—because you have been a poor abused child! I love you, and I want you to be good.' . . . . The keen round eyes

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of the black child were overcast with tears, large bright drops rolled heavily down one by one, and fell on the little white hand. Yes, in that moment a ray of real belief, a ray of heavenly love, had penetrated the darkness of her heathen soul."

It would be foreign to our purpose, which is merely a suggestive one, to enter upon the wide and oft trodden field of Education; yet we may remark in passing, the use and beauty of what may be called the Education of Observation. To have the eyes fully opened has its effect on the heart as well as on the mind. The little one who is accustomed to watch and understand the various beautiful gifts around, who makes friends of the mosses, the seaweeds, the rocks, the rainbows, the sunsets, will the sooner learn to say, "My Father made them all,"—and will the sooner learn sympathy and care for others who love them likewise. We have heard of family journals being kept, in which it was the pleasure and privilege of each child to write down every day, the various and varying appearances of Nature which it had observed,—the rare plant, the early butterfly, the curious stone, the habits of cuckoo, swallow, or corncrake, thus learning first to search, then to see, then to feel, then to think,—

> "While with an eye made quiet by the power
> Of harmony, and the deep power of joy,
> He looks into the life of things."
>
> WORDSWORTH.

Nor is it only external observation that may thus

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early be learned,—the different points of character,—the variety of pursuits, tastes, feelings, and sorrows, and the events both in and beyond the home circle, may all be usefully and intelligently noticed. "Accustom a child, as soon as he can speak, to narrate his little experiences, his chapter of accidents, his griefs, his fears, his hopes, to communicate what he has noticed in the world without, and what he feels struggling in the world within. Anxious to have something to narrate, he will be induced to give attention to objects around him, and what is passing in the sphere of his instruction; and to observe and note events will become one of his first pleasures. This is the groundwork of a thoughtful character."*

Another kind of Education which is much neglected, we find beautifully named the "Education to Happiness," in one of those books which become to us almost like a living friend.† Children are allowed to be happy when they are so inclined, but they are not *taught to be so* when they are *not* inclined. They are not roughened, so to speak, against the little mischances and disappointments of every day,—in eating, amusement, weather, or companions, but are allowed to cherish feelings disproportioned to the cause, and thus, in later years, "their garments become embroidered with hooks,"‡

* Locke, quoted in Christian Treasury.

† Friends in Council. See Essay on Education.

‡ *Ibid.*

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which catch troublesomely at all kinds of persons and things, which otherwise they might pass by, not only without offence, but giving or gathering use and comfort.

Before concluding these few suggestions upon the work of children, let us advert for a few moments to the additional grace and dignity which such a service confers upon the character and position of children and their mothers, not in this sphere of action only, but far more when both have passed into the heavens, and are at home with the Cherisher of "little children." Sore as is the trouble,—aching the void,—agonizing the sight of unused cradle, toy, book, and chair, yet when a Christian child dies, there is light and comfort, ay, and thankfulness, that it will never know the struggles, sins, and sorrows which otherwise lay before it. How much richer, however, the blessing, if in the long years that pass before the mother joins her child, she is permitted to see the evidences that its work was accepted,—its patience not lost,—its love not forgotten,—its simple reproofs laid to heart,—and to know that gracious influences, albeit unseen and unknown, have emanated from each part of its service! And when the time of reunion comes,—when the little redeemed one springs to its old place on the redeemed mother's breast, how far greater the boon that it is not only safe, safe for ever, but that it is occupying the higher place, and shining with the different glory which belongs to the suc-

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cessful servants of God. Nor will the gratitude to the Saviour of little children be less lowly, the love less adoring, that He has thus, by His free Grace and Spirit, enabled mother and child to fulfil His will, first on earth and then in Heaven.

"Oh, when a mother meets on high,
The child she lost in infancy,
Hath she not then for pains and fears,
The day of wo, the anxious night,
For all her sorrow, all her tears,
An over-payment of delight!"
SOUTHEY'S CURSE OF KEHAMA.

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II.

YOUNG LADIES' WORK.

"Remember now thy Creator in the days of thy youth, while the evil days come not, nor the years draw nigh, when thou shalt say, I have no pleasure in them."—Eccles. xii. 1.

"Now in thy youth beseech of Him
Who giveth, upbraiding not,
That His light in thy heart become not dim,
Nor His love be unforgot;
And thy God in the darkest of days shall be
Greenness and beauty, and strength to thee."
Bernard Barton.

There are few classes of a community more interesting and important than young ladies! We do not mean those who, so named by courtesy, have weathered not a few of the storms of life, and the fatigues of society, but those who,

"With all their clustering locks untouched by care,"

stand on the threshold of life, enveloping the misty and troubled future with the hopes and sunshine of their own lightsome position. Such a sight is very touching to the old. They would not, indeed, retrace one step of the way, yet they remember, with a wistful tenderness, those early days upon which was written, "Passing away." In the groups of joyous

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creatures which surround them, they see the materials of much that is to be important and useful in carrying out the work of their day. Some will go forth as wife and mother, spreading the influences of that early spring-time far and near,—some will encounter the responsibilities of single life,—others will arise nobly as guides and teachers,—others will take up cheerfully the cross of life-long pain and sorrow. Nor is this all—

> . . . . "In those fair and meek,
> And fragile things, as but for sunshine wrought,
> They see what grief must nurture for the sky,
> What death must fashion for Eternity."*

No wonder that the old feel solemnity and compassion, ay, and fear also, in gazing upon the young. It is not only, however, in their future aspect that they are thus important. Like all other beings of God's creation they have their present work. Who more important in their homes, in their social circles, in the schools and the sick-rooms of their villages,—who can diffuse more happiness, who can love, soothe, and influence brother, friend, and parent more blessedly than the daughters and sisters of England? But the old feel also disappointment. Too often the young,—even those who are afterwards chastened by sorrow and taught by grace, are useless and crippled in the prime of their sweet youth. Let us glance for a moment at some of the causes and effects—often

* Mrs. Hemans' Evening Prayer at a Girls' School.

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apparently slight—which are yet as the canker in the bud, as the axe grazing the green tree.

Here is the inmate of a prosperous and unbroken home; young, fair, healthy and beloved, yet neither happy daughter nor useful companion,—she is the victim of sentimentality! She delights in day dreams of future happiness or interesting distress, in which Self plays a prominent and praiseworthy part. She shrinks contemptuously from the matter-of-fact remarks and occupations of her mother and sisters: the hemming of pocket handkerchiefs for her schoolboy brother, the reading of newspapers to the dim-eyed parent, the preparation of delicacies for the invalid sister, are too uninteresting sacrifices to be pleasantly endured, and have no place in Moore, Byron, L. E. L., and the novels which feed her heart and intellect. She is always "in love," as the phrase goes, and though generally misplaced or unrequited, she is not disconcerted,—

> "For there's such a charm in melancholy,
> She would not, if she could, be gay."

She contemplates many tremendous sacrifices for the sake of imaginary and ungrateful heroes; but she never cultivates the daily yielding of her own way,—the subduing of temper,—the attention to household duties that would be imperatively demanded were her dreams to be realized. She is not without a species of religion, for she speaks much of

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the joys of Heaven; and when jars and difficulties arise, she exclaims with Mariana,*—

"I'm aweary, I'm aweary,
And I would that I were dead."

Yet she makes no serious preparation for the work either of living or dying.

Or she is the victim of discontent! If her mother were not so exacting, her brothers not so troublesome, her wishes more studied, her duties more pleasant, her good qualities better appreciated,—in short, if she were in any other possible situation, she would, in her own opinion, be an energetic and happy-minded worker; but as it is, she looks listlessly and ungratefully on all the daily beautiful gifts which God's bounty showers upon her. She reverses the good old precept, "Think much of small mercies, and forget small miseries," till at last there is a perpetual gloom on the brow, and querulousness in the voice, which ought to cheer her own and other's work with sunshine and music.

Or she is the victim of ignorance! From want of cultivation her memory, sieve-like, allows everything to escape,—even what she once acquired with no small expenditure of time and money. Dates and facts are to her as if they never existed. She knows nothing of the culture and habits of the flowers which she arranges in vases,—nothing of the graceful

* See Tennyson's Poems. We have always thought that Mariana would have been a happier woman had she set to work diligently—nailed the "peaches" to the "garden wall," trimmed the "flower plots," and swept away the cobwebs!

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green forms which fill the woods and the hills with beauty, and the hearts of fern-lovers with joy and gratitude,—nothing of the materials and manufactures, even of the ribbons, laces, silks, and ornaments, in the outward details of which she is not destitute of care and interest. Instead of gathering and rejoicing in knowledge, as the bee gathers the honey and rejoices in the aroma of the flowers, not for itself only, but also for others,—she is useless, ignorant, and uninterested in the pursuits that occupy usefully and happily the companions of her home. Many will be the occasions in her after-life, when she will say regretfully, "Would that I had applied my heart to seek after knowledge, in the days of my youth and leisure."

Or she is the victim of causeless fears!

She is of little service in her home, where presence of mind and calmness are required. None fly to her for support,—none trust in her for direction: a lancet is the signal of flight,—leeches send her into fits,—the sight of pain throws her into agonies of useless distress; and fears of infection are so overwhelming as almost to produce the dreaded malady. Unruly dogs and cows are the *bêtes noires* of her morning walks,—wasps and earwigs haunt her retirement,—and ghosts and burglaries mar her midnight peace!

Or she is the victim of idleness!

> "The silent heavens have goings on,
> The stars have tasks, but *she* has none."
>
> WORDSWORTH.

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Morning, noon, eve, and night, find her with folded hands and vacant gaze—or occupied solely in interrupting the pursuits of others,—in asking frivolous questions,—in giving utterance to idle gossip,—in lounging languidly on pavement or terrace. The tedium of a rainy day casts a still deeper gloom on that miserable and unnatural thing, the daily life of an idle woman, which presents a thorough contrast to the poet's lovely picture,—

> "*It rains*—What lady loves a rainy day?
> *She* loves a rainy day who sweeps the hearth,
> And threads the busy needle, or applies
> The scissors to the torn or thread-bare sleeve;
> Who blesses God that she has friends and home;
> Who, in the pelting of the storms, will think
> Of some poor neighbour that she can befriend;
> Who trims the lamp at night, and reads aloud
> To a young brother tales he loves to hear:
> *Such are not sad even on a rainy day.*"

If the victim of idleness were to give her own explanation of her case, she would tell you that at all events her life is a negative one,—if she does no good, she does no harm; but let her remember that there is nothing negative in the kingdom of Heaven.

Or she is the victim of society!

So necessary to her happiness are the crowded rooms, the late hours, the banter and the gossip, the excitement, the rivalry, the vanity, that constitute what is called Society, that though brilliant and engaging to the many abroad, she is dull, irritable, and unsociable to the few at home. Give her excitement and every ache and ailment vanish,—dim eyes

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sparkle, and pale cheeks flush with delight,—take it away, and she again sinks into the disagreeable daughter and sister. The quick repartee, the winning smile, the tender songs, which might make her dwelling-place so pleasant and tuneful, are reserved only for display; while, like all who go into society with no other aim than self-gratification and exaltation, she meets with many bitter mortifications—stings of envy and malice—haunting remembrances of foolish things said or done, aggravated by intense fear of what that society, for which she gives up all her best and holiest things, will say and think of her.

Or she is the victim of caprice!

As safely may the direction of the veering wind be calculated beforehand, as the mood in which she is to meet friend or sister; at one time all charm and graciousness, at another, cold and unconscious. In making new acquaintances, she will hastily take a violent fancy to one, and a causeless dislike to another, although these mature judgments are generally reversed upon the next convenient occasion. To any remonstrances that may be ventured on, an unanswerable argument is always at hand. "It is my way," is considered as ample solace and apology for the feelings she may wound, and the injustice she may commit,—forgetting that where there is a good "will," there is ever a good "way."

This list of "Victims" might be considerably lengthened, but we hope that we have said enough to lead

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young ladies to search for themselves into the faults and failings to which they are prone. A great motive for this self-examination may be found in the fact, that there is seldom such a thing as a solitary victim. Home victims must ever *make victims*,—their friends must be unhappy,—their work useless or left undone.

We frequently find, even amongst those who are sincerely desirous of fulfilling aright their duties to God and man,—a variety of faults often arising from youth and inexperience, which, while they do not mar happiness, yet seriously interfere with duty. Want of proper appreciation of their own position, is a common mistake amongst those who escape the opposite extreme of its over-estimation. "We have no talents, no influence," say they; forgetting, that if they have no other, they at least cannot be destitute of those peculiar though transitory talents belonging to the young, which, when they pass away, will leave stings behind if not consecrated to God. Youth itself, the absence of heavy care, mirth, buoyancy, and any degree of personal attractions, all contain materials of usefulness, and must be laid out to the advantage of Him who gave them;—while even of the apparently trivial details of dress and manner, which are more important and noticeable in the young, we have a solemn record that God takes notice to punish or to bless. (Is. iii. 16-24; 1 Pet. iii. 3, 4.)

It was engraved upon the signet ring of the Sultan Akbar, that "none ever lost his way upon a straight

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road." Exaggeration, and a want of this "straightness," are seldom sufficiently guarded against in youth. While black, or even "white lies," would be shunned and abhorred, how often we meet with that disingenuousness which conveys a double meaning,—with that incorrectness of statement which misleads and annoys,—with a want of that truthful simplicity which is expressed by the beautiful Scotch and German words *aefaldness* and *Einfältigkeit;*—not to speak of the various conventional falsehoods which it is so difficult for youth to withstand bravely.

Want of perseverance is also a very frequent and very serious obstacle to usefulness. "Everything by turns and nothing long," the young lady takes up all kinds of good and excellent ideas, but whenever difficulties arise, her heart fails, and she hastens to something else, that presents at first sight a less formidable aspect. Our young readers will wonder when we beg them to turn with us to the history of a celebrated French potter,* which presents one of the most striking instances of successful perseverance that the world ever saw. Bernard Palissy was born in 1509, amidst the walnut and chestnut forests of Perigord, and in due time became a painter on glass, which was then a profession followed even by nobles. One day he saw a beautiful enamelled cup of Italian manufacture;—although

* See Life of Bernard Palissy the Potter, by Henry Morley, Esq.

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accustomed from his childhood to search into nature's treasuries of flowers, trees, earths, and minerals, he yet knew nothing of pottery,—" had never seen earth baked; and there was no man in the nation who could make enamels. That last fact was the attraction to him. Enamels could be made,—there he beheld a specimen. What is possible is sure to him who wills, if he can use a little skill and a great deal of patience. So Palissy resolved to make himself a prince among the potters!" From that time commenced a struggle of sixteen years with broken earthenware,—unsuccessful chemical preparations,—furnaces fed in vain with the tables, chairs, and doors of his own dwelling;—ridicule of friends,—calumnies of enemies,—opposition and want of sympathy even from the wife of his bosom,—hunger,—fatigue,—confusion,—and shame;—" but never despair, enamel has been made in Italy—why not in France?" One day some of the melted material ran over the earthen potsherd,—it cooled,—it hardened,—it whitened into a lovely enamel, the first that France had made! Still, many a disappointment awaited him before it was a complete and useful discovery; but at last Bernard Palissy stood forth as the inventor of that beautiful Palissy ware, which gained for him name and influence in high places, lifted his family out of poverty and obscurity, and is still to be admiringly beheld in his own and other lands. All this may seem irrelevant matter in addressing young

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ladies, who are certainly not likely to become "artists in earth." But Bernard Palissy performed a greater work than the mere discovery of enamel. He shewed the intense and almost unconquerable power of perseverance. No matter, then, what your object may be,—only gain this habit, and exhibit this example, and great results may happen both to yourselves and others. When the little spider of Scotland succeeded after seven trials in accomplishing its tiny design, it could hardly have been thought that a crown and an empire depended upon its work. The persevering spirit of Bernard Palissy was not, it should be added, confined to his earths and his enamels, but gave a beautiful example in all things, of Christian stedfastness. Grand old Huguenot,—brave preacher of the Word,—undaunted martyr for his faith,—after years of patient imprisonment, he went joyfully to his God from the dungeons of the Bastile.

The very charms of youth,—its impressibility,—its vehemence,—its highly wrought and susceptible imagination, are all snares in its path, especially in connexion with the external and exciting religion of the present day,—presenting its idols of favourite doctrines, contended for with unseemly tenacity,—its false shrines whereon is offered incense to idolized ministers, in comparison with whom all others seem tame and powerless; its false worship which can only be offered amidst the excitements of the sanctuary, and which starves and dies on the silent Sabbath in

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the solitary chamber; its disregard of the apostolic injunction, "Take heed *what* ye hear," and its substitution of its own, "Take heed *where* ye hear." Still greater is the danger when the youthful enthusiast is thrown in the way of the glare and the glitter—the music and the architecture of Roman Catholic services, whether hidden or avowed. Displaying the goodly blossom, while they bear the bitter fruit,—working upon the innate carnality, while they seem to rouse but the highest essence of spirituality,—they minister to the craving for excitement, to the love of all that is beautiful, save the beauty of holiness, thus pleasing the senses but not impressing the soul. In this state of false excitement, while there is much that seems pure and elevated, there is ever one element wanting,—the truth as it is in Jesus. The sensitive spirit, while rapt in the glories of music and architecture, finds it hard to descend to the quiet self-denial of daily and besetting faults; and, above all, to the consciousness of sin, and the need of a Saviour,—and herein lies the danger. Many an enthusiastic temperament, exquisite in its sensibilities, has been thus led away from the sober realities of religion, and drawn step by step, first to hear, then to admire, then to frequent the musical services in church and convent, till it was found asleep on the enchanted ground, and enveloped in the net of the fowler.

There is only one defence against the dangers—

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one deliverance from the peculiar snares that beset the path of youth. To say that this is Religion, is to say little in these days of profession, and of various opinions as to its proper nature and degree;—we prefer to characterise it as *whole-hearted* religion. Nothing else can give a victory over the small outward manifestations of that inward sinfulness, which is never small in child of Adam. Nothing else can so teach and inform the hearts of sister, friend, daughter, betrothed wife, that they shall be enabled to fulfil their various and loving duties, happily for themselves, successfully for others, and devotedly for God. Nothing else can put a stedfast vigour into all the touching offices which it is part of youthful work to perform to the aged, or to those who are still younger. Nothing else can give those just views of life and love, which, while preventing the heart from frittering away its affections idly and changeably, will make it welcome a deep and well-grounded attachment as sent from God, even if it brings with it sorrow and disappointment. Nothing else can give the faith and the courage necessary to subdue misplaced affections, thus lifting their yearnings from the dust, and satisfying them with those things that are at the right hand of the Saviour.* We have here enumerated

* We must give ourselves the pleasure of quoting the following beautiful passage from a female writer of the day:—"To her who has loved not 'wisely,' perhaps, but 'too well.' . . . we would say, 'Be strong and of a good courage;' we would assure her that passion is not and cannot be eternal; and that it must ultimately die out with the hopes on which it fed. But while the heart in which it has raged unresisted, is left barren and seared, perhaps for ever, that in which it is conquered

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some of those occasions of life, when it is a blessed, nay a necessary thing to be "an unequivocal Christian." Need we say that nothing but such an entire dedication can prepare the young for a "brief life and an early immortality." The white unmossed head-stones of our churchyards, and those that are grey and mouldering, alike bear dates that show how early the young can die; and how awful, if thus snatched from the joys of this life, they rob themselves of the joys of the next! But blessed is the triumph, when through the faith of Jesus Christ we may gaze fearlessly—

> . . . . "Where
> That fair brow, and those unfrosted locks
> Return to dust,—where the young sleeper waits
> The resurrection morn,—and lift the heart
> In praise to Him who gave the victory."*

Of this whole-heartedness we have a brignt example in Madame Guyon, who, like the stars that shine in darkness, arose out of the corruptions of the Romish Church. In her earliest youth † Mademoiselle

through the might of higher principle, is purified and ennobled by the victorious struggle. The victory is not to be won in solitude. The duties of life are equally binding upon us in sorrow as in joy; we may not abandon our post because it is difficult to maintain. Nor is it in shrinking from social duty, but in patiently and perseveringly performing it, that we shall find the truest source of consolation. Life ceases to be desolate when we find that we have still power to give pleasure, to do good, to be ourselves a blessing, though we be not blessed. And the blessing will not fail to come even to us at last,—the peace of a heart that has won the victory over itself, that has subdued passion by principle. One dark enigma of life will then be solved, and we shall have learnt that not the enjoyment of happiness, but the fulfilment of duty, is the object of our existence on earth."—SELF CULTURE.

* Mrs. Sigourney.

† See Life of Madame de la Mothe Guyon, by Thomas Upham.

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Jeanne Marie Bouvières de la Mothe was singular, even in the fastidious Paris of Louis Quatorze, for her beauty and fascination, and for the powers of a mind, "fait pour le monde." At sixteen she was married to Monsieur Guyon, a wealthy but unwelcome suitor; of which event she said long after, "No sooner was I at the house of my husband, than I perceived it would be for me a house of mourning." It required long years of domestic misery, of bereavement, bodily sickness, and mental depression to turn her heart *wholly* to the Lord. At last, while still in the prime of her youth and beauty, and beset by many worldly temptations, her biographer says of her, "And here, I think, we may mark a distinct and very important crisis in the history of her spiritual being. Taught by sad experience, she saw the utter impossibility of combining the love of the world with the love of God. 'From this day, this hour, if it be possible, I will be wholly the Lord's. The world shall have no portion in me.' Such was the language of her heart,—such her solemn determination. She formed her resolution after counting the cost,—a resolution which was made in God's strength, and not in her own,—which, in after life, was often smitten by the storm and tried in the fire; but from this time onward, so far as we know anything of her history, was never consumed,—was never broken. She gave herself to the Lord, not only to be His in the ordinary and mitigated sense of the terms, but to

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be His *wholly*, and to be His *for ever*,—to be His in body and in spirit,—to be His in personal efforts and influence,—to be His in all that she *was*, and in all that it was possible *for her to be*. There was no reserve." *

Through the whole of Madame Guyon's noble missionary and martyr career, we find this feature of whole-hearted consecration ever prominent. She was permitted to see the full triumph of faith in her home,—to shew forgiveness to the mother-in-law who had cruelly injured her,—to minister peace and comfort to the husband who had tyrannized over her,—to be the means of conversion to hundreds who called her their spiritual mother,—and to show forth God's glory in society, where it was said of her by one of the world's devotees, "It is very visible that she lives in the presence of God." Permitted to let her sweet and stirring voice be heard in hymns that yet cheer the Zion-ward traveller, and in valuable works of devotion, she was counted worthy of even more honour. She was chosen to confess Christ and His free justification, and above all, His Spirit's free sanctification, before kings, and rulers, and Roman ecclesiastics; for His name's sake she suffered the loss of all things,—persecution,—solitary confinement in various French fortresses, and for four years in the fearful Bastile, next door to the dungeon where perished the Man in the Iron Mask. She at

* See Life, vol. i. p. 108.

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last (in 1717) died a death in banishment, of which it was said, "Such a departure, preceded by such a life as we have described, might be called a *transition* rather than death. It is proper, indeed, to say, that she died; but it is equally proper to say, that she *went home.*" It is true that there were some doctrinal and "mystical" errors resting upon her faith, but they were spots on the sun,—hay and stubble dropped for a while on the firm rock. We shall conclude our chapter by the following lines, expressive of this devoted Christian's entire self-renunciation and divine love.

"I love my God, but with no love of mine,
For I have none to give;
I love thee, Lord; but all the love is Thine,
For by Thy love I live.
I am as nothing, and rejoice to be
Emptied, and lost, and swallowed up in Thee.

"Thou, Lord, alone, art all Thy children need,
And there is none beside;
From Thee the streams of blessedness proceed,
In Thee the blest abide.
Fountain of life, and all abounding grace,
Our source, our centre, and our dwelling-place."

MADAME GUYON'S POEMS.

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III.

WORK OF TEACHERS AND TAUGHT.

"Whosoever shall do and teach one of these least commandments, shall be called great in the kingdom of Heaven."—Matt. v. 19.

The governess! the governess! oh wearily she sits,
While midst the dazzling throng another vision flits;
A mirthful circle cometh, with footsteps swift and near,
And she is there so joyously,—but she wakes with start and tear.

The governess! the governess! now lonely in her room,
The wounded nerve is throbbing,—the brow is dark with gloom;
Not a kindly word was spoken,—not a glance in heart to bide,
Even the mothers and the sisters passed on the other side!

The governess! the governess! oh patiently she bends,
While the day it goeth drearily, as if it never ends;
The children turning careless from the task that's scarce begun,
The brow of weary aching, when all the tasks are done.

The governess! the governess! her work is scorned and lowly,
Yet in the clear true heavens it is counted blessed and holy;
The white-robed angels tenderly their glances on it cast,
And her loving God accepteth it,—with whom she rests at last!

At first sight it appears a social enigma, that mothers should entrust the education of their children to strangers, instead of counting it as their own especial privilege. It can, however, be easily and satisfactorily solved. It is a measure of necessity, real or fancied. The frequently defective education of mothers themselves forms one obvious reason;

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their want of time is another, whether caused by needful home and social duties, or by the distraction of those worldly scenes in which it is strange indeed to find *mothers* happy and absorbed. Another reason we may find in the fact, that teaching is seldom regarded in the light of a privilege: mothers are delighted with the amusement of their children, but exceedingly anxious to be saved all the trouble; hence teachers are classed amongst the absolutely necessary luxuries of life, such as ladies' maids and carriages. But there is yet another reason. It is not always advisable that even those who are well educated and at leisure, should be the sole instructors of their children. Teaching includes two things,—instruction and discipline,—and when competent to give the first, parents are apt to fail in the second, so great is the temptation to listen indulgently to rambling remarks and untimely laughter, or to have superfluous compassion on wandering thoughts and languid faces: the colder, firmer manner of a comparative stranger, is therefore found an excellent aid in producing efficient discipline. There are also wise and merciful providential reasons to be traced for these social arrangements, when we consider how many talented and highly educated women are daily deprived of homes and wealth by the fluctuation of private and public affairs. Such being the case, it is not difficult to form Utopian theories as to the position which governesses might be expected to occupy

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in society. Possessing minds refined by cultivation,—manners fitted for any station,—sensibilities made keen by misfortune,—hearts oppressed by anxiety for struggling and distant beloved ones, they may yet be the honoured and useful inmates of a happy home. They are engaged in the peculiarly feminine and *lady*-like office of teaching and guiding the young, "thus possessing peculiar facilities for coming in contact with the unfolded and unformed mind." They are companions and coadjutors of mothers to whom they are not inferior in heart and sentiment, though probably their superiors in talents and in knowledge. They are the teachers of future mothers, who in their turn may become teachers of future sons; and thus they "are accountable for the characters of the next generation."* We may therefore expect to find them revered and beloved as instruments in carrying on the great work of education,—a work so great, indeed, that if its external aids and machinery were suddenly to be stopped,—if none were to be had save what fashionable or untaught parents could or would bestow, the next generation would be useless and ignorant. We may expect to find that the name of governess only excites ideas of reverence and respect,—that she who bears it occupies at the same time the full position of LADY, so difficult to define, but so universally understood,—that parents may send their daughters, without fears and weeping,

* Mrs. Sigourney.

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into families where mutual advantages are given and received.

That these expectations are not wholly theoretical we acknowledge gratefully, for we know that there are homes in Britain where the governess is treated like elder daughter and cherished sister,—when the immediate tie is severed, still the beloved friend and companion,—and in the decline of life soothed and comforted by the ministrations of her pupils. That this is the exception to the rule, must, however, be acknowledged by all who have looked around them with any but the most superficial vision;—acknowledged self-justifyingly by some,—with doubts and difficulties by others, and with earnest purposes and loving resolves by a few. The sober facts are, that instead of holding a high status in society, the very name of "governess" is painful to its bearer,—its use is checked before her by thoughtful kindness, and it is applied contemptuously by vulgar scorn. Kindness she often meets with, but it is the kindness of condescension,—not the consideration of friend to friend, lady to lady. *In* the home, but not *of* it,—in society, but barricaded from it,—surrounded by crowds, yet the loneliest there,—her thoughts unguessed,—her conversational powers untried,—her accomplishments unpraised,—her feelings, if thought of at all, considered very troublesome things,—she creeps to her room to stifle in tears, or in meekness, or, alas! in bitterness, that baneful feeling of undeserved social

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insignificance,—of ungrateful and unworthy slight, which sinks like a leaden weight upon the energies of the most patient and hopeful. Yes! we said *ungrateful*, for who is she the neglected and the solitary one? She is the trainer, not of the body that goes down to the dust, but of the immortal mind that came from God,—she is the guider, not of little steps upon the nursery floor, but of precious souls upon their way to God. This is the woman who is exposed to neglect from her equals, to undignified familiarity or positive rudeness from her inferiors, and to unchecked petulance, unkindness, and irreverence from her pupils. This is the woman left in her old age to die untended and forlorn, thankful for the charities of strangers,—the refuge of public institutions,—or for the alms drawn reluctantly from the purses of those in whose behalf she had spent the best, if not the happiest years of her life.

And why is this, O heads of professedly Christian households? What is the reason in your own secret minds for doing yourselves and your children such flagrant injustice, and for inflicting needless mortifications upon one who never injured you, by thus degrading the instructress of your children? Is it because she receives, in return for her services, a small proportion of your worldly superfluity? So also do the courtly ladies of royal palaces, whom you would proudly welcome to your saloons,—so also do the eminent physicians, lawyers, officers, lionized authors

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and authoresses, whom you number amongst your acquaintance. Is it because she is possessed of the gifts in which you are deficient? Is it because she has no home wherein to be loved, and happy, and important? Is it because it is less trouble to have your governess sitting in her solitary chamber, than to blend her with your family circle, or to introduce her to your social one, as another and a welcome guest? Is it from that laudable desire to keep all in their proper places, which generally results in their being placed exactly in their wrong ones? We doubt whether the great Hearer of cries, and Counter up of tears,—He who looks more to the principle than to the degree,—will listen to such reasoning more complacently than to the logic of the planter, and the consequent moan of the slave.

It is not with impunity, however, that these things are so,—evil consequences of no small magnitude must and do arise. The evils of a governess's position are so universally known and dreaded, that the influence and instruction of many peculiarly gifted and talented women are lost to the young, because they lack moral courage to face the ordeal. They are driven instead to dependence upon friends and relatives,—or they seek shelter in some Romanizing "sisterhood,"—or they depend for a precarious subsistence on the sale of drawings and fancy work,—or they take upon them heartless and loveless vows. Thus valuable feelings and energies are forced out of

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their right channels into unnatural ones, thereby necessarily producing flaws in the whole structure of society. It has been well and wisely said, "To make education a great work, you must make educators great also." * When, therefore, the teacher is degraded in the eyes of a child,—when she is exposed to neglect, to rudeness, and to have her authority despised, the things that are taught are degraded also. May not this be the reason that there are so many half-educated women, (save perhaps in the article of accomplishments,) that in their youth they were encouraged to look down on their instructress, and, necessarily, on her instructions also? May not this be the foundation laid, of much of that principle of evil, whence such wo cometh into the world—even the want of care and consideration for fancied inferiors, and real dependents,—even the existence of the oppressor and the oppressed!

It is easier to comment upon social errors and inconsistencies than to avoid them ourselves, or to point out the best means of their removal. But we may be allowed to say, that the cause which we are advocating would come good speed, if parents would but consider it as part of their solemn work for God, affecting succeeding generations, to raise high the standard of education and educators. Let them open their hearts as well as their doors, to the educated, though otherwise destitute lady, keeping themselves

* Friends in Council.

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in *their* proper places, in order that she may be kept in *hers*. Let them impress upon grown up son and daughter, upon servants, and upon the strangers that are within their gates, that this woman is their friend, and the benefactress of their children. Let the mother consider it part of her work to draw out the excellencies, to give courage to the bashfulness, to teach those minor, yet daily refinements, in which it may be by accident of birth, though not the fault of education, she may be deficient. Let the mutual work of parent and governess be ever kept in view, so that hand in hand, and heart in heart, they may carry on God's designs. Let it be tenderly impressed upon the children, that *their* portion of the work is not only to be taught, but to make their teachers happy—not only to learn with diligence, and remember with attention, but to nurse her in sickness, to soothe her in sorrow, and to be sweet and real ties to her heart, taking the place of those which have been severed.

Far be it from us to allege that there are not "faults upon both sides,"—that the governess is not too frequently captious, irritable, "presuming," and tenacious; but before judging too hardly of these manifestations, which might be our own in the same position, would we not need, Howard-like, to penetrate the secrets of the prison-house—nay, Christ-like, to read the volume of the heart? We would, therefore, simply say to the governess, that of the

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important work which God has given her to do, teaching is but a part; one essential portion is to seek *to be* taught—for who needeth more the teaching that is from above,—and this not once, which is to last for ever, but every day anew, for every task anew, in every difficulty anew, must the teacher be the taught of God! She must also work her work, by bearing meekly the mortifications and slights which may find place in her daily lot, and so to dignify them by love and forbearance, by humility and consistency, that the alleged necessity of keeping governesses at a distance may in her case be disproved,—thus lending a helping hand, and giving a bright example to her sisters in similar positions. Let her try to cultivate, in spite of all drawbacks, a home-like spirit,—not unnecessarily changing or giving up in discouragement,—not cold and hard to her pupils, but patient and loving as to her little sisters at home,—not too familiar, and not gossiping, but teaching them to be her companions in better things, thus raising them up to a higher level. The chiefest part of her work, however, must always be to *win*, as well as to *teach*, the little ones to "go to Jesus." We cannot better conclude than by quoting part of one of Miss Mary Jane Graham's very appropriate Letters of Advice to a Governess.* "And first, I earnestly recommend you to 'Look unto Jesus,' in your choice of a situation.

* See Memoir of Miss Graham.

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Pray constantly for Divine assistance and direction on this most important subject. 'Look unto Jesus, also, for strength to perform the duties of your situation. These you will find to be many and arduous, such as in your own strength you can never rightly perform. The more correct and enlarged your view of those duties, the more readily you will sink under them, unless you can be strong in the Lord, and in the power of His might. 'Look unto Jesus' for counsel in the difficulties of your situation. When your path is so intricate and perplexed that you know not which way to turn, then ask the Lord to 'lead you in a plain path,' to order your steps in His word. In every little, as well as in every great perplexity, follow David's rule, to 'inquire of the Lord.' The advice of friends is ever to be sought and valued; but that of the kindest and wisest may sometimes be insufficient or erroneous, or given in a harsh and injudicious manner. But the Lord giveth not only advice, but wisdom, liberally and without upbraiding. 'Look unto Jesus' for comfort and encouragement. The life of a governess is peculiarly subject to little daily crosses and vexations. These, as well as great ones, are to be borne by laying them upon Jesus. No burden is too great or too little to be cast upon the Lord. A cheerful looking unto Jesus, an assurance that He ever loveth, ever careth for us, will bear us through many petty annoyances, which sometimes wear health and spirits much more than

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real and great grievances. Lastly, 'Look unto Jesus' for a certain reward upon your labour. You have a promise—'Train up a child in the way he should go, and when he is old he will not depart from it.' Ask for patient, earnest faith, to plead this promise importunately, incessantly with Him. The great Sower will assuredly watch over the seed that is sown in faith, and will bring it to perfection. You may labour day after day for the souls of the children under your care, and yet see them as careless and unconcerned as ever; but look steadily unto Jesus; take contentedly the Lord's leisure, for in due time you shall reap if you faint not."

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IV.

HOUSEHOLD WORK.

"I will walk within my house with a perfect heart."—Ps. ci. 2.

"She looketh well to the ways of her household."—Prov. xxxi. 27

"Fly not the household task,—the duteous care,
Each gladness heighten, and each sorrow share,
Where pine the poor, be near thy help to lend,
Be thou thy brother's aid, thy server's friend;
With Martha's zeal, yet Mary's "better part,"
Walk thou within thy house with perfect heart."

"I am not she that list
Her anchor to let fall
For every drizzling mist—
My ship's substantial."
Anne Askew.

In saying a few words upon the subject of Domestic Work, we do not intend presumptuously to invade the domain of those old and established matrons, who move awfully before the eyes of the inexperienced at an obscure and unattainable height There are many, however, young, if not in years, at least in knowledge, who are placed, by the events of Providence, at the head of their father's, brother's, or uncle's household, and we think that to such, a few words of homely advice and experience, worked

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out of inexperience, may be as welcome as the exhortations of those who seem never to have known a time of weakness and ignorance. Though sneered at by the modern blue-stocking, and opposed to the habits of the sentimental and the fashionable, there is no doubt that the domestic sphere is natural to feminine tastes and talents,—so much so, that every woman, of whatever order of mind, if left unbiassed by training, and giving herself earnestly to her work, will find in it interest, satisfaction, and consequent success. It is adapted, not only for times of prosperity, as active and healthy employment, preventing those undue sedentary habits which are so destructive to health, but in times of sorrow and suspense, it will be found a most suitable remedy—in the very contrast it presents—for nervous restlessness, for over-indulged, or sentimental grief. Thought for others, which is the very essence of Domestic Work, will act like a charm in giving the heart occupation, and the life an object, when reading, writing, working, music, or drawing are wearisome and distasteful. From the days when Eve "bestirred her then," and "tempered dulcet creams," to the present, when, if not in our own, yet in neighbouring lands, ladies of the highest rank partake of all household labours, this species of work has been justly considered as a fitting, though not a sole sphere for the employment of feminine capacity.

Let us glance for a moment at the nature of the

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position thus bestowed upon woman. She is the mover of a little world, which will not turn upon its axis, or will take some erratic and uncomfortable course, if she withhold from it due aid and impetus. She is the director of those to whom, like the centurion of old, she can say "Go," and they go, "Come," and they come. She is the framer of domestic laws, upon which depend the every-day comfort, happiness, and usefulness of several, if not many individuals. It is clear, therefore, that the duties devolving upon the female head of a household, are at once important and honourable. Those who involuntarily assume this position, are often, however, not disposed to welcome its onerous responsibilities. Accustomed to have their time much at their own disposal, and to spend it in elegant and leisurely pursuits, or in schemes of external usefulness, it seems a grievous waste of time to set to work every morning on a routine of household duties. Accustomed, too, to absolute indifference and ignorance as to the day's providings, it is highly disagreeable to find a preponderance of beef and mutton, and their divers adjuncts and allies, in the scale of the day's interests,—and to have bakers, butchers, and grocers, formerly almost mythical personages, suddenly invested with reality and distinctness. Now we are not disposed to underrate the unpleasantness of all this, especially when aggravated by small means and utter ignorance; but though at

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first a cross of no small magnitude, it will not long continue to be so, if taken up cheerfully and resolutely,—its difficulties grappled with, and its heaviest weight laid where, like all other burdens, it can alone be lightened.* This sort of trial is generally increased by struggling under the yoke, as if it were unworthy of an educated or Christian mind, to be cast down by such "contemptible trifles." So it is,—but not for the reasons generally assigned. It is not wrong to spend time and serious thought upon these things,—which are *not* contemptible,—because the confused household, the uncomfortable dinner, the arrangements without tact and discrimination, will throw discredit upon the profession of a Christian woman, and consequently upon Him who called her to be so. But it is wrong so to be overborne by anxious and careful thought, that their cheerful fulfilment is rendered impossible, and other duties are shadowed and burdened by it.

There is a striking home and household picture, presented to us by the beloved family of Bethany,—wonderful in its portraiture of character,—wonderful as bringing the Lord of Heaven before us for once in a happy earthly home,—wonderful in its adaptation to the needs and infirmities of feminine nature. We see the active and energetic Martha, burdened with the cares and responsibilities of her household

* "Yet I do persuade myself, you know, that the weightiest end of the Cross of Christ that is laid upon you, lieth upon your strong Saviour. For Isaiah sayeth, that in all your afflictions he is afflicted."—RUTHERFORD'S LETTERS.

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work ;—"cumbered with much serving," Martha, like many another woman, allows it to come between her and her Divine Guest. The consequences are not confined to herself; they produce irritation and injustice. She goes to Jesus,—and that she did so, fearlessly, shows how home-like and familiar a guest he was,—saying, "Lord, dost thou not care, that my sister hath left me to serve alone? Bid her, therefore, that she come and help me." Then comes the gentle yet faithful answer, so exquisitely adapted to find entrance into every woman's heart,—"Martha, Martha, thou art careful and troubled about many things. But one thing is needful. And Mary hath chosen the better part, which shall never be taken away from her." Let us learn then from this passage,—not the lesson which it was never meant to convey,—that everything but religion is to be neglected, but the lesson so to take this "one thing needful," into all duties, all "serving," all perplexities—that everything may become blended into that good part which shall never be taken away.

Martha's over-care is one of the principal snares in the paths of those housekeepers who escape the opposite extreme of not caring at all ;—and very touching is it to the burdened and self-reproaching heart, to meet with this ready response, "Cast all your care upon God, for He careth for you ;"—*all* your care, dear friend,—that care with regard to the morrow's dinner for those difficult to please—that

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perplexity about a provoking or ill-suited servant—that doubt from whence is to come the needed supply for your household wants,—all to be cast upon another, and that other your Father who is in Heaven. There is significance too in that word "cast,"—which does not mean that you retain your cares while you call upon God for help and sympathy,—no! you cast them away,—they are no more yours but His! Oh, it is wonderful love, wonderful condescension!—let us see that we take the full benefit of it. And more wonderful still when the result and the answer come,—the doubt solved,—the emergency provided for,—the care to be no more recognised,—the absolute proof given that God has heard,—that God has considered,—that God has approved and answered. Martin Luther gave the following beautiful illustration:—"This little fellow," said he of a bird going to roost, "has chosen his shelter, and is quietly rocking himself to sleep, without a care for to-morrow's lodgings, calmly holding by his little twig, and *leaving God to think for him.*" As a practical evidence of the Lord's thoughtfulness for the comfort of His people, even in little things, there is something very touching in His care of the lost garment,—when its restoration was forgotten by the careless neighbour, and the owner is exposed to cold and discomfort, He says, "when he shall cry unto me, I will hear, for I am gracious."*

* See Exodus xxii. 26, 27.

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When God has lifted the care, which is the heaviest burden of all, from the mistress of a house, He does not leave her to do nothing. He bestows various gifts, which are to be employed for the Giver's glory; —they are scarcely looked upon as gifts, however, as their bestowal is so common,—till deprivation of some of them teaches us the lesson. God gives us *time.* "Why, that is a truism," you answer; so it is,—yet one that we are apt to forget. When the interesting volume comes in the way of a consultation in the kitchen, or an unnecessary visit to an acquaintance occupies the time which ought to have been employed in the storeroom, or at the account-book, we do not often remember that we are defrauding God of the time which He intended for keeping all things right and in order within our own little sphere.

God gives us *capacity*, if we would but use it. There are few instances of a woman destitute, even naturally, of that household talent which will enable her to fulfil her various duties, much more when under the guidance of Him who giveth liberally all kinds of wisdom. If not always completely successful, she may at least take the comfort to herself, that when she has done her very best, honestly and prayerfully, failure may be a sorrow but is never a fault.

God gives us *money;* a small share it may be, or a large one, to be stewarded for Him. Not to be grumbled over,—because it is so small; or to be buried in the earth,—for that is less trouble; or

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squandered in extravagant dress, or useless bargains, or expensive dishes,—but that every shilling may be thought over, and cared for, as God's gift, and made to produce its full amount of use, happiness, or comfort. It is very common to hear people say, and to say ourselves, "If I had but more money, how much good I would do with it." The best way to remedy the evil, is to do as much good as possible with what we have, that God may increase the value of a stewardship, which he sees we are conscientiously holding. It is well to ask ourselves with each sovereign or note that passes out of our hands, "What is God's intention with regard to this money?" and as far as possible to work it out,—learning to give cheerfully, and to refuse bravely, when your only reason for giving what you cannot justly afford, is that miserable one, "What will people say?" Of course, in this conscientious expenditure of God's bounty, you must expect to encounter not a little self-denial, for it is difficult to remember in a tempting shop, that your money is not your own, but like every other talent, is "bought with a price." It will involve trouble too, "for wisdom will always have a microscope in her hand,"* and there must be that careful and exact calculation in the smallest matters, without which you cannot be a just steward. It is a common quotation, that "the love of money is the root of all evil;" but we must not forget also, that "money answereth all

* Guesses at Truth.

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things;"* and that when torn from the roots, and grafted upon good fruit-bearing trees, it becomes that blessed thing wherewith widows' hearts may be made to sing for joy, wherewith the orphan and the fatherless may be kept from the paths of the destroyer, wherewith messages of mercy may be sent to the far off heathen,—and upon the disposal of which, God looks with peculiar interest, for it is said that He *loveth* a cheerful giver.

God gives us *servants*. Did you ever look on them in this light? as gifts, and very valuable ones, —more valuable than you can fully appreciate, unless you meet with a reverse which will compel you to be your own servant; then you will understand how much you owed to them. Perhaps there is a greater amount of querulous dissatisfaction on this subject than on any other; indeed, complaints of servants are so universal, that curiosity is sometimes excited to know whether the complainers would behave with the requisite degree of perfection were their positions to be reversed. That there are many bad servants, and that they are a very serious domestic affliction, none can deny. The most inattentive, the most giddy, the most unfaithful, are not, however, "all evil;" and to find the tender spot in their hearts, to draw out their neglected energies, to give them a sense of sorrow, and responsibility for the uneasiness they occasion, must ever be included in the work of

* Eccles. x. 19.

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a mistress. To do this fully, much grace is of course required, not only to deal wisely and faithfully with them, but also to deal wisely and faithfully with ourselves. It will not do to be thoroughly alive to their besetting sins, without being conscious of our own: it will not do to keep a stricter account of their failures to us, than of our failures to them; nor to expect a thorough feeling and knowledge of our wants and ways, and yet be destitute of sympathy with them. If it is a difficult thing to fulfil the duties of a mistress, it is no easy thing to be a servant. Brought into the closest contact with stranger fellow-servants of opposing tempers and designs,—treated negligently, yet perhaps harshly, by their mistresses,—expected to know everything by intuition,—to think yet not to think,—to have perfect memories, and no feelings,—indeed, to like being found fault with, rather than otherwise,—exposed to every temptation to levity and dishonesty,—perhaps forbidden to see in comfort a few respectable and useful friends, and thus thrown upon disreputable society, enjoyed surreptitiously, what can we expect from servants, if mistresses are not true to them and to themselves? Oh, then, dear friends, let us search into the relations between us and our servants, and endeavour to realize, that if they have a work to do for us, we have a work to do for them. Part of this work must be to make them love you, even while holding firmly the reins of domestic government; and this you will never suc-

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ceed in doing, till you learn to look at their duties and their necessities from another point of view than your own position, even from what you would yourself experience were you in theirs. Is your treatment of them as just,—your tone in reproof as calm,—your consideration in sickness as tender,—your compassion in sorrow as real as you would expect from your superiors, were you in a subordinate situation, nay, as you expect now from those who have any authority over you? Example is likewise an essential part of domestic work. What we are in our households, will bear a strong influence upon what our servants are in ours, and what they will be in their own, should they ever take up house for themselves; they are quick-sighted,—and the selfish indulgence, the inconsistency in religion, the unjust suspicion, will always be noticed, and sometimes be copied by them. While on the other hand, there is the hope that an exhibition of the opposite qualities may be blessed in leading them to be taught by the same Spirit that can alone produce them. Example, however, is not enough. Precept, and above all, prayer, must also be employed in carrying out the highest part of the work,—the safety and eternal happiness of the souls under your roof; but the mode and means of doing so must necessarily vary so much with circumstances, that they must be left to be settled between the mistress and her God. How beautifully and impartially the Scriptures unfold to us this portion of household ethics, so necessary

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for Christians to study and practise! "Servants, obey in all things your masters according to the flesh; not with eye-service, as men-pleasers; but in singleness of heart, fearing God. . . Masters, give unto your servants that which is just and equal; knowing that ye also have a Master in Heaven."*

God gives us the *poor*. "Them have ye always with you;" and great is the privilege of trying to fulfil the wishes of our Saviour as expressed in this verse, that the care of the poor may be part of our constant work; "ye have them *always* with you." We class this amongst household work, for it is closely connected with it, and we cannot help thinking should be more so than is generally the case. When the mistress of a house is anxious to do good, she very properly becomes a tract distributor,—the visitor of various poor people who are known as objects of charity,—the member of a clothing society, of a soup kitchen, and so on. It is quite right that these things should be done, but all the while there are claims equally real though not equally obvious, which ought not to be left undone. It is often a great temporal blessing to the poor, when any special accident, sickness, or misfortune befalls them, for then visitors flock in, comforts are pressed upon them, and, in short, they become *fashionable* for the time. It would be better, however, to reach the poor before their extremity of need

* Col. iii. 22, and iv. 1.

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comes; and this is, we think, peculiarly the province of the female head of a household, for there are many branches, so to speak, from the domestic stem, which require to be looked to and tended. We knew a case which may illustrate our meaning. A washerwoman was occasionally employed by a lady, who, however, knew nothing of her except her name. One day she was asked to visit her, as she was ill. She found the poor woman in the last stage of a mortal malady, aggravated by a craving for—whisky! Now that she was ill, she became "interesting" to a number of visitors, and there was no lack of sympathy and comforts, till death closed the scene. It was, however, a subject of deep sorrow and self-reproach to her employer, to find that for years this poor woman had subsisted on the occasional pittance she had received from her; and that poverty, accompanied by a pride which forbade complaint, had driven her into the habit of intoxication. Half of the attention showered upon her, on her almost unconscious deathbed, if extended in the years of struggle with poverty and temptation, might, humanly speaking, have been the means of arresting her untimely, and though not hopeless, yet unsatisfactory end. Keep watch, then, over those in any way connected with your daily work, and while not neglecting the open and abject cases of distress, take heed to them also who "make no sign." Do you know anything of the condition of your washerwoman,—of your occasional "help,"

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or messenger,—of your milk girl,—or baker's boy? Better to be the means of helping them now by sympathy, by advice, by judicious aid and interest, than to fly to them when prostrated by distress, in a paroxysm of tardy, though well intentioned, and zealous benevolence.

Mrs. Bury, a pious lady, who died two hundred years ago, was so impressed with the importance of her household work, that she had engraved in Hebrew characters upon the walls of her room, "Thou God seest me!" We shall conclude this chapter by the following beautiful verses, peculiarly appropriate to all domestic work:—

"So others shall
Take patience, labour, to their heart and hand,
From thy hand and thy heart and thy brave cheer,
And God's grace fructify through thee to all.
The least flower, with a brimming cup may stand,
And share its dew-drop with another near."

ELIZABETH BARRET BROWNING.

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V.

WORK OF EMPLOYERS AND EMPLOYED.

"So I returned, and considered all the oppressions that are done under the sun; and behold the tears of such as were oppressed, and they had no comforter; and on the side of their oppressors there was power; but they had no comforter."—Eccles. iv. 1.

"They know the grief of man, but not the wisdom;
They sink in man's despair, without its calm—
Are slaves, without the liberty in Christdom,—
Are martyrs, by the pang without the palm,—
Are worn, as if with age, yet unretrievingly
No dear remembrance keep,—
Are orphans of the earthly love and heavenly:
Let them weep; let them weep;
They look up with their pale and sunken faces,
And their look is dread to see,
For they mind you of their angels in their places,
With eyes meant for Deity."

Elizabeth Barret Browning.

The relation between the employer and the employed is a subject which occupies the high places of counsel in our land, and agitates the minds of the statesman and the political economist. Its abuse shakes the very foundation of the social edifice, and its remedy would make England what she professes to be, "the land of the free." This question is peculiarly fitted for the attention of our sex,—even of those who profess that "they know nothing of politics;" for like the power of the gentle moon upon the rest-

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less ocean, they have a strong and abiding influence upon the susceptible masses of society. Of course, the branch of it which comes most peculiarly within the feminine province, is that which concerns the various abuses resulting from—DRESS. The curse pronounced against the produce of the earth, and the doom of hard labour, are yet unrepealed, and never do they seem so strangely sad, so sin-like, so death-like, as when visible in terrible contrast with the beautiful and the graceful. So exquisite are the forms and fabrics of clothing, that were it not for the "sweat of the brow," and the sorrow of the heart, which are its awful accompaniments, its original purpose as a token of the Fall, and a sign of God's displeasure, might well be forgotten.

Very numerous are the aristocratic and lovely ladies who are to be seen in that magnificent and incomprehensible London. Nurtured so tenderly, that the winds of heaven may not visit them too roughly,—not doomed to tread the vulgar earth, but borne on prancing palfreys, or in gorgeous equipages, surrounded by the loving and the admiring,—with the generous impulses and tender hearts of England's daughters beating beneath the crust of conventional coldness, they are yet the unthinking instruments of worse than Inquisition tortures,—life-long and hopeless. Those exquisite flowers, those graceful capôtes, those becoming corsages are the price of blood. Where shall we look for the twiners of the garlands.—for

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the fabricators of the goodly raiment? In the gloomy and unhealthy back rooms of this gay and glittering dwelling,—the champing horses at the door, the jewelled and feathered dames lavishing hundreds in the showroom, contrasting strangely with the stern realities of the world within. Young and tender girls, some from the town, others from the sweet and far off country, work there from ten and fifteen to twenty hours a-day, according as the demand comes for elaborate and hastily wrought dresses. No time for breathing the fresh air, no time for stretching the constrained and racked muscles, or restoring the circulation deadened by one unchanging posture. No sufficient supply of wholesome food. No Bible reading, and little prayer, save what may go up from the quivering lips, while the hands are busy over baubles and gew-gaws. Little time for sleep, so needful even to the happy young,—for if the employer must figure in her robes at the ball or birth-night, the employed must drag wearily through the night, with eyes dazzling, and brain swimming,—kept awake by unnatural stimulants, and on extra occasions allowed a quarter of an hour's swoon-like sleep, from which there is a miserable awaking. And alas, at times, no Sabbath rest! If the employer scruples not to invade the holy day, she will not heed though the employed must, in her service, break into its blessed hours. Under such untoward and blighting circumstances, the health of the "young ladies,"

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(bitter irony there is in the appellation!) seldom lasts; a hectic flush, a flying pulse, a rasping cough, and the young girl, old in her youth, is sent with her miserable pittance to her home—*to die.* Killed by the needle, which ought to be but an emblem of happy home industry;—a sharper death than the bodkin of old which pierced the heart quickly. Killed by tunics and flounces, by trains and mantillas. Killed because the tender and delicate woman has no mercy. Well it would be if these were the only evils to which the employer—virtuous herself, and philanthropic, when she *thinks* of being so—exposes the employed. Those who do not escape by death oftentimes escape by *sin.* A few kind words and treacherous promises, a vision of release from her slavery, a hope of light, and air, and rest, and food, and to none is the downward path to destruction so easy and certain as to the dressmaker's apprentice.

There are lower grades of poverty, deeper shades of grinding human misery, still within your province, O rich and beautiful Belgravian. Who sews the fine linen of your trousseau, which you take with you to a new and happy home? Who fastens the folds of your riding habit, which you complacently exhibit in Rotten Row? The slop-worker! who obtains not the honest value of her work, but is employed second hand and at nominal prices by the gay shop and the fashionable tailor.

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"Work—work—work!
Thy labour never flags;
And what are its wages? a bed of straw,
A crust of bread and rags.
That shatter'd roof—and this naked floor—
A table—a broken chair—
And a wall so blank, my shadow I thank,
For sometimes falling there."

"O! but for one short hour!
A respite however brief!
No blessed leisure for love and hope,
But only time for grief!
A little weeping would ease my heart,
But in their briny bed
My tears must stop, for every drop
Hinders needle and thread!"

HOOD.

It is said by the Political Economist, that "the lowest point to which wages can be permanently reduced, is that which affords a bare subsistence to the labourer." Such a rule were a blessing to the slop-worker. She may *exist*, but she scarcely *lives*, and too frequently she ceases to "subsist," unless she resorts to the frightful alternative which is the doom of "three out of four of the young women in London who do slop-work."*

These are well-known and often proved facts, and may be met with, alike in the political pamphlet, in the newspaper column, in the American squib, in the exciting novel. The young and enthusiastic grudge not tears and exclamations, and plans for a crusade in behalf of their favourite dress-making heroines; but when the worn and weary milliner's

* See a deeply interesting pamphlet upon the Slop System by Thomas Hughes, Esq.

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apprentice, or seamstress, comes in their way with no other qualifications for a heroine than uncomplaining wretchedness, the zealous impulse is unaccountably forgotten,—the uninteresting girl is allowed to shiver at the door,—to be received with impatient and reproachful words,—to have work thrust upon her calling for cruel and unnecessary haste, and to depart without her just and sorely required remuneration. Were the bright unclouded eyes of these children of prosperity to be fastened day after day, and hour after hour, to the needle-work which they abhor,—were they to feel the benumbed limbs and aching spine, and stooping blood-charged head, for one week, even with all the alleviations of their comfortable homes, the impression would not be so transient. Others who are more deeply and truly interested in the subject, console themselves by thinking, that as they are not particularly fashionable,—seldom order fine dresses, and never live in London, that they have no part or lot in the matter; but the evil is not confined to London. In Dublin, in Edinburgh, in Manchester, in the provinces; wherever, in short, there are ladies to be dressed, and makers of dresses, the evil to some degree exists, to be remedied as well as mourned. Have you ever seriously reflected on the covenant which exists between the employer and the employed?—the one having something done which they cannot do for themselves, the others obtaining food and raiment

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which they could not otherwise secure; but when the employer receives the full amount of use and comfort from the employed, while they in her service lose things more precious than the silver and gold that they receive, the covenant is falsified,—the true relation marred. It would be a happy day for England, if every British lady without exception, young and old, married and single, in town or in country, would resolve, that while claiming, if they choose, the work of the dressmaker and seamstress to the uttermost farthing, they would in the same measure perform their work to them, giving just and punctual remuneration,—wearing the old dress rather than torture human beings with the hurried new one,—not wasting time by unpunctuality to appointments, or by turning over finery which they do not intend to purchase,—inquiring for themselves who are most deserving and needy,—shewing a kindly interest in their various circumstances,—proving that they know that they have souls, and are earnest for their safety. The employer who does not thus do her best,—it may be in a limited and obscure sphere,—to diminish the blot and the misery of English slavery, cannot consistently lift up her voice in weeping over the miseries, or denouncing the oppressions that exist in America. The surest way of testifying sympathy and one-heartedness with the noble strugglers for emancipation, and of proving the practical good

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which has been done in this country by "Uncle Tom's Cabin," will be to labour for home emancipation, thus depriving the slave-holder of the handle which he turns to such good or evil account, when he cries triumphantly, "Look to your white slaves, O England."

If this is the first step, however, it need not be the last. When the English lady's conscience can testify, that by influence and action she protests against the woes that are in her own land, it were hard indeed that she should be compelled to wait till all had done likewise, before she could manifest by voice, true though feeble, by aid, hearty if not successful, her abhorrence of that giant crime, that remorseless legalized cruelty, which exists in a land of Christianity and equality. Rather will her efforts, her sympathies, and her prayers in that quarter, be the means of stirring up and encouraging her to work still more diligently for her beloved England. Rather will her increased knowledge and abhorrence of slavery make her a stronger and better armed champion against the practice, where the principle is denounced. And now little is left to say to the employed; we might sing to them with the poet,—

> . . . What if the bread
> Be bitter in thine inn, and thou unshod
> To meet the flints? at least it may be said,
> Because the way is *short*, we thank thee, God!"
>
> ELIZABETH BARRET BROWNING.

But we prefer leaving with them the prayer of the

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prophet, "Lord, I am oppressed, undertake for me." Were the words of that sublime prayer taken to heart, the oppressions of daily circumstance, of toil, of unkindness, of sin, and of temptation, would be all rolled off upon the Great Burden-bearer, who can alone "undertake," either for employer or employed,—who can sustain under the wasting poverty, and shooting pain, and incessant toil,—who can keep the foot from falling in the slippery place, and give light through the horrible shadow of death,—who can inspire the heart with love and forgiveness, and teach diligence and punctuality in serving the unjust as well as the just,—even the Lord Jesus Christ, the Loving, the Faithful, the Righteous.

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VI.

COUNTRY WORK.

"The Lord shall greatly bless thee in the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee for an inheritance to possess it."—DEUT. xv. 4.

"Not with the mean and vulgar works of man,
But with high objects, with enduring things,
With life and nature; purifying thus
The elements of feeling and of thought,
And sanctifying by such discipline
Both pain and fear, until we recognise
A grandeur in the beatings of the heart.
WORDSWORTH.

"Love had he found in huts where poor men lie,
His daily teachers had been woods and rills,
The silence that is in the starry sky,
The sleep that is among the lonely hills."
Ibid.

IT is a curious proof of a certain quality in the human mind, sometimes called discontent, sometimes perversity, sometimes mildly named love of change, that while many who dwell in cities pine for the dimly remembered or seldom enjoyed country, those whose beautiful homes are amidst woods and hills and waters, often hurry from them to the town, and the town-like watering-place. It is not unnatural that those who live amidst the noise, the interruptions, "the fretful stir unprofitable," the

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"greetings where no kindness is," which abound in cities, should look with feelings akin to envy upon a life by the lonely sea-shore, or river-bank, or "brae-side," adorned with loveliness fresh from the hand of God;*—the quiet, the rest, and the leisure, form a vision of delight to many, especially to those who enjoyed these privileges in early days. "If we but lived in the country," say they, "it would be so much easier to be diligent, to be consistent, to be separate from the world." Like most other yearning desires for what is beyond our reach, this is founded on wrong conceptions of what is really good for us.

Besides the steady anchorage to the soul, afforded by giving up the will to God, as knowing best where to fix the bounds of our habitation, there are wise and visible reasons for checking the murmur, and consoling the sorrow. A town life has solid advantages, and useful lessons to recompense the Christian for the loss of the imagined paradise. There is the almost compelled self-denial and self-control, in the constant yielding of our own way to meet the sudden emergency, or to suit the convenience of others,—there is the felt need of watchfulness against the surrounding worldliness,—there is the frequent call to the scene of distress,—there is the ever deepening sense of the reality of life and action. The heart that is at peace with its God, the hands that have His purposes to

* "God made the country, man the town."

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fulfil, may be, and the probability is, will be more patient and diligent amidst these untoward circumstances, than if the plain of Ease, which the pilgrims found to be short and quickly traversed, were to be extended along the pathway ;—

"For Love's a flower that will not die
For lack of leafy screen,
And Christian hope can cheer the eye
That ne'er saw vernal green:
Then be ye sure that love can bless
Even in this crowded loneliness,
Where ever-moving myriads seem to say,
Go—thou art nought to us, nor we to thee—away!

"There are in this loud stunning tide
Of human care and crime,
With whom the melodies abide
Of th' everlasting chime;
Who carry music in their heart,
Through dusky lane and wrangling mart,
Plying their daily task with busier feet,
Because their secret souls a holy strain repeat."

KEBLE.

Country life—so fair and pleasant externally—far from being devoid of trials and snares, presents a class of temptations, which, though more hidden, is to many minds more dangerous. Sloth—selfishness—love of ease—forgetfulness of life, and its urgent claims to God's service, "while it is called to-day," may all exist unsuspected in the smooth routine of a country home. The garden—the poultry-yard—the pleasant volume by the winter fire-side, or beneath the shady summer trees—the flattering dependents in tidy cottages, or school-children in fancy uniforms, to be visited and looked at,—the occasional archery

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meeting or county ball, or formal dinner party,—the array of servants, who take off all charge of household affairs, form the elements of a life which goes on with the smoothness and regularity of clock-work. Day after day the same, or nearly so, there are no beacons to warn against indolence,—there are no landmarks pointing out the fields of work. Earnest endeavour, therefore, against selfishness, against folding the hands in sloth, and wrapping the heart in its own imaginings, is peculiarly needful for those who, possessing the talents of leisure and undisturbed repose, are apt to lose that vitality which must be infused into the service of all, whether inhabiters of town or country.

There is one kind of work peculiar to dwellers in the country, upon which we shall briefly touch. None are so imperatively called upon to "declare the wondrous works of God,"—to have knowledge of them, and rejoicing in them, as those who, far from the imitations of art, are surrounded by the originals of nature. Debarred, it may be, from the proud fanes, with shaft and corbel, with screen and transept, into which man has built his great heart,* they have the architecture of God in old stately mountains, with pine, and heath, and cataract,—in forests, with heaven-pointed arches, and columns

* . . . . "The architect
Built his great heart into these sculptured stones."
LONGFELLOW.

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bronzed and gnarled,—in the unpillared temple of the heavens, with its bright traceries, and delicate starry oriels. If they cannot obtain concert, oratorio, and opera, they have the winds that sweep the chords of the forest branches,—and the melody of the ocean waves,—and the rippling of the burn-waters upon the white pebbles,—and the voices of the mavis and the merle. If galleries of paintings are awanting in their neighbourhood, the purple of the distant hill, the vivid green and rich brown of trees and waving grasses, the scarlet glory of the western clouds at evening, and the colours of the little wild flower petals, are ever near to shame the palette of a painter, and to darken the flush and the glow of the canvass. But all these things are too often looked upon with careless and accustomed eyes,—or they fill the imagination of the beholder with sentimental delight, without a recognition of the hand of the Lord, without a suggestion to the heart, of His will and word, that we should "seek out and take pleasure in His honourable and glorious works."* God has given us a wonderful proof of His own appreciation of the operation of his hands,—of the importance He attaches to them, and the great effects which their study may produce. The only arguments by which He drew from His self-righteous servant the confession, "*Behold, I am vile!*" were the power and wisdom of the Creator as shown in the founda-

* Ps. xxviii. 5. Job xxxvii. 14. Ps. cxi. 2-4.

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tions of the earth—in the staying of the mighty ocean—in the parting of the gladsome light—in the sweet influences of the Pleiades—in the formation of the snow, and the hail, and the frost of the heavens, —in the goodly wings of the peacock, and the strength of the pawing war-horse. "Then Job answered the Lord, and said, Thou canst do everything."* Let not then the dwellers in the God-made country cast away their privileges unimproved. Let there be an intelligent and adoring study of God's wise and beautiful designs, and their marvellous adaptation to the use and happiness of man. Neglect not the fallen apple. Overlook not the mechanism of the vine tendrils. Turn not away from the polished and jewelled surface of the dew-drop, or the crystallized stars of the snow storm.† Be not contented with seeing, and admiring, and wondering at the beautiful objects and curious natural phenomena you may encounter, but make it your business to search for information, either from books, or from those who have made such pursuits their study, so that you may be fitted to give glory to God intelligently, and in your turn to stimulate others to the perception and the admiration of His creative power.

Attention to God's inanimate works alone, were, however, but a partial fulfilment of country work.

* See Job, chaps. xxxviii., xxxix., xl.

† See a beautiful passage on "Divine Contrivance" in Abbott's Corner Stone. Chap. i.

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Although outwardly less degraded than wynd or cellar, there exists nearly as much moral and mental degradation in the picturesque cottage, or in the lonely hamlet; and sometimes the fairest scenes of nature are chosen habitations of sin and misery. Help to the needy,—the rescue of the miserable who abound in every neighbourhood,—the consideration for dependents who, though pleasing and respectful in manner, may yet greatly require an elevating hand, will of course come within the sphere of a country lady's work, in which her influence is even more decided and extended than that of her town neighbour. Frequently the only person of united means and will within a few miles, the lady at the "great house" has an almost unbounded personal influence over her poorer neighbours. Whether they make known their expectations or not, it is from her that the sick look for help,—the impoverished for money,—the young women for service, or recommendation and advice for it,—and the whole neighbourhood for that kindly and familiar intercourse with their superiors which they prize so highly, and which may be made so useful to them. Even the mistress of a smaller dwelling than the large "country house," has a greater number depending upon her individual aid, than in towns where work is so much generalized by associations and societies,—she comes into contact with the poor, untrammelled by the presence or the views of others,

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and while equally their benefactress, has more leisure to be their friend.

Country Work will also take a wider range, and calling into exercise feminine tact and powers of arrangement, it will aim at the highest type of improvement, which, going beyond the outward adornment, or pecuniary benefit of an estate, secures the hearty co-operation of the lower classes in their own comfort and elevation. It is not uncommon to see the tiny but picturesque cottage fitted into some favourite nook, or finishing some lovely vista, and a whole family crushed into it from a more commodious dwelling, without the slightest regard to their convenience; or we have show villages furnished with useless luxuries and comforts, which are only a source of annoyance and irritation to those who have just emerged from the hut and the hovel, wretched to our view, but much more in accordance with their own feelings and wants. Feminine influence will be rightly used in procuring more thoughtful and better applied help,—and in adapting improvements to the progressive state of those who are to be benefited, thus taking away gradually all dislike to the innovations of light, and air, and space, and cleanliness.

There is another portion of a lady's country work of which we must say a few words, and that is, her influence over the husbands, fathers, brothers, and friends who hold the position of "country gentlemen."

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Amongst this class many are to be met with, who, originally well educated, and gifted with respectable if not superior talents, have fallen into that state of deterioration, which is absolutely unavoidable, when country sports, instead of being kept in their proper place, as amusements, are magnified into the object and end of life. A country gentleman, the heir expectant to a large estate, was lately heard to expatiate on the difficulty he had found in arranging the employment of his time throughout the year. He did not live in a county that was regularly hunted, nor was there much curling in the neighbourhood,—golf, which presents such a resource for the destitute in some favoured places, was unknown,—and the cricket ground was too distant. But beginning with the grouse on the glorious twelfth of August, and then in succession studying the partridges, the pheasants, the woodcocks, (the draining had left but few snipes,) and the wild-ducks, he got through the winter pretty well, and by advancing a little the spring and summer fishing, he contrived to fill up the time till the happy August "moor days" came round again. Such was the cycle of his work. Such was his understanding of the words, "Occupy till I come." Similar deterioration, though in a lesser degree, may be found resulting from an undue absorption in farming and other country pursuits, which in themselves are most useful and laudable. The effect of this is either directly prejudicial to woman, or it acts injuriously

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in preventing all communion of tastes and pursuits between her and the masculine members of her household. With whom, therefore, does the power of amending this social and individual evil rest so entirely as with the gentler and more refined sex? Who can so skilfully substitute the intellectual volume, for the Sporting Magazine, or the Farmer's Calendar,—who can so judiciously give just the requisite degree of interest in the favourite sport, claiming and obtaining in return a kindly and rational interest in their own more elevated pursuits,—who can foster the languid aspiration and recall the long lost enthusiasm more successfully than the wives and the sisters of fox-hunters and farmers?

We have given but a very hurried and superficial sketch of a few of the duties and snares belonging to a sphere which may be made at once so honourable and so delightful; but we have said enough, if any are persuaded to seek the cultivation and exercise of that energy, which is peculiarly needed to counteract the enervating tendencies of tranquillity and repose, and to put a higher spirit into the enjoyments which are so liberally scattered around. The "perfect gifts" of Creation call with a loud voice to the "work," which will make their enjoyment still sweeter,—adding a significant beauty to the sunset,—a healthier balm to the breeze,—a more solemn loveliness to the moonlit hills and valleys.

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VII.

SABBATH WORK.

"If thou turn away thy foot from the Sabbath, from doing thy pleasure on my holy day; and call the Sabbath a delight, the holy of the Lord, honourable; and shalt honour Him, not doing thine own ways, nor finding thine own pleasure, nor speaking thine own words: then shalt thou delight thyself in the Lord."—ISAIAH lviii. 13, 14.

"Did ever law of man a power like this
Display? power marvellous as merciful,
Which, though in other ordinances still
Most plainly seen, is yet but little marked
For what it truly is,—a miracle!
Stupendous, ever new, performed at once
In every region,—yea, on every sea
Which Europe's navies plough;—yes, in all lands,
From pole to pole, or civilized or rude,
People there are, to whom the *Sabbath* morn
Dawns, shedding dews into their drooping hearts."

GRAHAME'S SABBATH.

"Nobly distinguished above all the six,
By deeds, in which the world must never mix."

COWPER.

THE title of this chapter must sound strange to the ears of those who look upon the Sabbath only as a day of enforced and unwelcome rest, of languid yawns, of vacant hours, and of fervent desires for the termination of the weekly day of penance. The original element of the day was—rest, but rest

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includes happiness;—that were a miserable rest for a man which permitted his mind to be a prey to weariness and vexation,—that were a thing with a name, but without a substance, which offered rest and withheld happiness. Therefore has the Lord expressly made provision for this want, and promises "delight" to those who "call the Sabbath a delight, the holy of the Lord, and honourable." We do not intend to enter upon any Sabbatarian controversies, but simply to point out the different kinds of "Work" which would make the hallowed day assume its right place as the "Pearl of the Week," and make its observance an intelligent, active and happy duty, instead of the slavish ceremony which it too often is. This is doubly important when we consider how large a portion of time would thus be redeemed from waste, and restored to happiness; each person who lives seventy years, has lived ten years of Sabbaths!

We shall notice first, *Preparatory Work*. We can bring no melody from the harp-strings all jarred and unstrung by the damp and rust of a period of disuse,—they need to be attuned before the rush of music can be swept from their chords. In like manner the heart that is damped and exhausted by the cares, and bustle, or distracted by the amusements of a long and late Saturday, can never breathe cheerful and inspiring music on the Sabbath, and can only give to its services a Pharisaical spirit of formal and discordant observance. The Jewish "day of prepara-

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tion"* might afford a beneficial lesson to the Christian; it might fitly lead him to commence the spirit of the Sabbath on the previous day, by so arranging circumstances that no undue flurry of worldly business, or unnecessary society, or even physical fatigue, shall interfere with the remembrance that the morrow "is the day which the Lord hath made—let us be glad and rejoice in it."

Then we have *Personal Work*. Each portion of consecrated time ought to be a mile-stone in the narrow way,—"a Sabbath-day's journey towards heaven." To those who on week-days are in a constant state of occupation and over-fatigue, and whose hours of retirement may at any time be interrupted and shortened, how blessed to stand still and see the salvation of God,—to draw water out of the wells of Salvation without check or hindrance,—to commune with their own hearts, and with their own Saviour,—and to "search" into the hidden mine of Scripture, like the "more noble" Bereans.†

Then we have *Sanctuary Work;* not to be viewed as a mere excitement in an otherwise blank day, or as the amusement of a "public place," where friends and strangers may be commented on, when other resorts are forbidden,—not as a work done for us by our pastors, with which we have no concern, save perhaps to approve or criticise,—but as part of our own individual and solemn work to which a special promise is

* Luke xxiii. 54. † Acts xvii. 11.

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attached, "I will make them joyful in my house of prayer."* Have we neglected to pray for those beloved "workmen," that they may rightly "divide unto us the word of truth?"† Have we left unsung, or sung only for the sake of the music, those spiritual melodies, which when poured forth with fervent heart, though with stammering lips, blend with the songs of the angels? Do our thoughts wander upon the mountains of vanity, while prayer is ascending to fill the golden odorous vials?‡ Do we listen to the words of instruction, with ears "itching" after eloquence and excitement, or idolizing an Apollos, a Paul, or a Cephas, forgetting the message in its way of delivery, —forgetting the Sender in the sent? Then are we leaving undone arrears of important work, for which we must give account to the Lord of the Sabbath.

Then there is *Social Work.* Surely the day on which the most joyful event of the world's history took place, is especially a day for that chastened gladness which will shew itself, not by austerities or moroseness, but by a double share of kindness, love, and sympathy to all around. Many claim a high place for music in the home employments of the holy day, but as Cowper says,

> "Love, joy, and peace make harmony more meet
> For Sabbath evenings, and perhaps as sweet."

It is beautiful to see, as it is in some households, the Sabbath made a day to be distinguished by the more

* Is. lvi. 7. † 2 Tim. ii. 15. ‡ Rev. v. 8.

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than ordinary interchange of affection and confidence between the members of the family,—where exclusion from its social privileges and its happy circle of instruction, is considered as one of the most painful of punishments. This species of Sabbath work need not be confined to home society, but ought to include anxious and individual effort to commend the Sabbath as "the poor man's day," to those of the lower classes who come under our influence,—thus doing our best to leaven the mass with the primary element of all that is healthful and gladdening. The poor man knows little of the blessedness of the day which his God gives him. He is either worn down by hard and involuntary work, or he is tempted by the specious arguments of his superiors, to walk in his own ways, and find his own pleasure, and speak his own words, in "innocent amusements," which are neither God-obeying nor God-delighting;—or he substitutes by his own darkened will a day of his own, like the shoemakers of London, who are ashamed to appear upon Sundays in their miserable clothing, and therefore work all the Sabbath, and make Monday or Tuesday their day of unhallowed and disobedient rest. To lead such, therefore, either by precept or example, to know something of that rest and enjoyment to be derived from the intelligent spiritual observance of the Lord's day, producing a contrast and variety of employment which is the secret of all true relaxation, would be

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one of those "works of mercy" that might take its place in the services of the heavenly Sabbath.

Then we have *Active Work.* If those to whom the Sabbath is a weariness, and its duties but lifeless things, would but try the experiment of teaching a Sabbath-school class, they would be astonished at the life which it would give to the day, and at the object which would arise in their hearts and minds for thought and interest during the week. It might seem that the occupation of teaching a few children in a pew, or in the corner of a school-house, was one of slight importance; yet a useful and devoted servant of God,—who but lately went to his rest, and his reward, after years of agonizing and nobly borne sufferings,—traced his conversion to the instruction of a young lady at the Sabbath school, which, though apparently neglected, came freshly to his heart after years of forgetfulness and folly.* Listen to the words of an eminent American author on this point:—"As you love the Church which Christ loved, and desire to see it built up of living stones, fashioned after the similitude of a palace, come, bring your tools, ye wise and skilful workmen who have laid them by to rust. Disdain not the call. There is noble work for you to do, in helping to shape and ornament the materials which are to constitute 'the Church of the future.' . . . Joining itself with kindred influences, your influ-

* Pastoral Memorials of the late Rev. W. Gregory of Clifton.

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ence upon the mind of some youth may be precisely that which is to give momentum and guidance to its energies. You may fix a thought which will shape a character and fix a destiny. Through this medium you may be more effectually working for the Church and the world, than you could by any other, because you may be helping to prepare for society a benefactor, who, as a minister of Christ, or a jurist, a statesman, a physician, a teacher, will show 'how great a matter a little fire kindleth.' Out of public sight, your work may be obscure and unblazoned; but like that of the bee, which in the dark builds its cell and stores it, it is none the less good, in that it proceeds upon the principle of that divine philosophy, which is equally apparent in the kingdoms of nature and grace, and which teaches us not to 'despise the day of small things,' since it is God's pleasure that His kingdom should come, 'not with observation.' Then come forth and help to build the temple of God, though no noise of the hammer and axe be heard in the work. The great empire of thought is silent, but in it dwell God and all spiritual creatures. Aim then to belong to it, for, though silent and unseen itself, it is destined to govern the world. In it, though out of sight, is to be found the secret spring which is steadily moving the hands forward upon the dial-plate, until they reach the hour of time."*

* A Call to Christians to Labour in the Sabbath-School, by the Rev. D. Potts. Quoted in Monthly Messenger.

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That Sabbath-school teaching is an object of easy attainment and of small requirements is a very common mistake; and one of the reasons that Sabbath-school teachers so often fail of success, is surely because they neglect the employment of their whole powers of *mind*, as well as of heart. No common gift is it to have a sufficiently clear understanding, to make the things, understood by ourselves, intelligible to the young; no ignoble exertion of the intellect to overcome the difficulty of suiting thought and expression to a lower standard of ideas than our own, and to speak as a child to children, yet as a teacher to the taught, not only instilling knowledge, but eliciting thoughts, questions, and difficulties;—no unworthy use of the treasures of a well-cultured mind and memory, to bring the apt illustration, the striking anecdote, the historical event, the phenomena of nature, to commend and enforce the lesson of practical instruction. The benefit of devoting a little time every day in the week to intellectual preparation for the Sabbath-class duties, is very great;—it is too often the custom to give only a short space on Saturday evening to the preparation of the lessons for the following morning; there is no leisure for meditation,—the required texts and illustrations vanish from the memory, and the lesson is ill-prepared and ill-digested. But the habit of reading and pondering over the passage, verse by verse, during the week, making notes of whatever may

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occur to us in the way of parallel texts, illustrations, or practical lessons, will send us on Sabbath mornings into endeared and familiar ground. The importance of prayer, regular, every-day, and individual, for our Sabbath-school children, is also obvious. There is often a reaction after the bodily and mental excitement and fatigue of teaching, which produces a kind of insensibility for the first days of the week,—the duty is over for the time, and cast aside, and the souls of the scholars are forgotten, till a few cold and hurried petitions are offered up at the end of the week. Every Sabbath-school teacher, however, has found, that it is just in proportion to his week-day prayers, his real earnest pleadings, that the class prospers on the Sabbath. If this duty has been neglected, that is the time when one scholar comes lazily in after the preliminary prayer,—another stammers over her lesson,—a third yawns remorselessly in the middle of our most interesting illustration, and we return home with the mortifying feeling that we have not reached the heads or the hearts of our pupils. If, however, we have been enabled to pray *real* prayers during the week, for the progress of our classes, for strength in our own souls, and for that feeling of weakness, which is, as it has been well called, "a sinew of God's strength," then may we go to our places *expecting* to find that there has been a good influence upon our scholars during the week, *expecting* to see

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the eyes glisten, and the brows become earnest, and the hearts anxious, and the souls safe. Nothing but such believing help, thus sought and found, will overcome the difficulties and stumblingblocks in the way of the Sabbath-school teacher. Nothing else will give the enduring faith, going on Sabbath after Sabbath without any fruit, and yet believing that fruit will come. Nothing else will strengthen against the fatigues, both mental and physical, and take away the nervousness which so painfully besets many teachers,—the heart sinking at the sound of the coming feet, the stammering voice, the confused address. Nothing else will give that love to the shepherd, which will make the heart first exclaim, "Yea, Lord, thou knowest that I love thee," and then, as a natural consequence, hasten into the fold to "feed His lambs." Nothing else will give that love to the strayed little ones, which will enable the teacher to "search them out in the dark and cloudy day,"—to overcome dislike, prejudice, and weariness,—to visit them in their own houses, and to watch in after life even the careless and ungrateful. We need not fear that this labour will be wasted, or that it is less than is required. It is a melancholy fact, that there is little visible success in our Sabbath-schools, and for this sad *effect* there must be a *cause*. What is it then? Can God be unwilling to save? Has Jesus Christ ceased to say, "Let little children come unto me?" Is the Spirit unable to come down in floods upon

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the dry ground? No! we must look at our own hearts for the cause,—at our own scanty prayers and tardy praises, and slothful preparations.

Sabbath-school teaching is not only a pleasing, important, and useful duty,—it is also an imperative one upon all who are not hindered by the force of circumstances. There are ever peculiar agencies of evil at work against each rising generation, and if we refuse to come to the "help of the Lord against the mighty," we place ourselves in the awful position of Meroz,—

"Curse ye Meroz,* said the angel of the Lord.
What has Meroz done? Nothing.
Why then is Meroz to be cursed? Because Meroz did nothing.
What ought Meroz to have done? Come to the help of the Lord.
Could not the Lord do without Meroz? The Lord did do without Meroz.
Did the Lord then sustain any loss? No, but Meroz did.
Is Meroz then to be cursed? Yes, and that bitterly.
Is it right that a man should be cursed for doing nothing?
Yes, when he ought to do something."—Luke xii. 47.†

One other kind of work appropriate to the Sabbath remains to be noticed, and that is *Prospective Work.* Sabbath evening, too often the period set apart for untimely sleep, letter-writing, or gossiping conversation, has been beautifully called "the seedtime for eternity," and it is also the pledge and earnest of the Sabbatism of eternal life. If we take no part in the work of the Holy Sanctuary here, how shall we be pillars in the temple of our God? If we value not the rest of the earthly day, how shall we enter

* Read Judges v. 23. † Children's Missionary Record.

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into the rest that remaineth for the people of God? If the Sabbath of twenty-four hours is to us a weariness, how shall we endure that Sabbath which hath no end? It is necessary then to keep ever in view, amidst our Sabbath duties, the important one of making ourselves ready for a Sabbath that is not of earth. We must struggle against our backwardness to the work,—against our discouragements,—against our weariness,—against our want of spirituality, because unfitting us for the adoration, the activity, the delight in spiritual things, which must be elements of the coming glory. We must rejoice in the Sabbath as in the beautiful streaks of the light which groweth into noon-day sun, as in the first refreshing drops of the rill, which spreadeth into the mighty ocean.

"He shall assist me to look higher,
Where keep the saints, with harp and song,
An endless Sabbath morning;
And in that sea commixed with fire,
Oft drop their eyelids, raised too long
To the full Godhead burning."

ELIZABETH BARRET BROWNING.

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VIII.

THOUGHT WORK.

"The thoughts of the diligent tend only to plenteousness; but of every one that is hasty, only to want."—PROV. xxi. 5.

"The gentler charms which wait on female life,
Which grace the daughter and adorn the wife,
Be these our boast; yet these may well admit
Of various knowledge and of blameless wit,
Of sense, resulting from a nurtured mind,
Of polished converse, and of taste refined."
HANNAH MORE.

"The key-stone of thy mind—to give thy thoughts solidity,
To bind them in an arch—to fix them as the world is in its sphere,
Is to learn from the book of the Lord, to drink from the well of His wisdom."
MARTIN TUPPER.

To think, is no uncommon employment. The miser thinks about his gold,—the young lady thinks about her bonnets and balls,—the gossip thinks about her neighbours; yet is Thought a comparatively rare achievement. "My friend," said John Foster, "*to have thought far too little*, we shall find among the capital faults in the review of life. To have in our nature a noble part that can think, would be a cause for infinite exultation if it actually did think, as much and as well as it can think, and if to have an unthinking mind were not equivalent to having no

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mind at all. The mind might, and it should be kept in a state of habitual exertion, that would save us from needing to appeal for proof of its existence to some occasion yesterday when we did think, or to-morrow when we shall."

Equally important for the welfare,—equally constituting a part of the work of both sexes, Thought requires to be specially cultivated by woman, as it is more opposed to the natural constitution of her mind, and frequently altogether omitted in her education. Woman, therefore, must educate herself to think. She will thus become a more harmless member of society, for the woman of reflection rarely gossips, rarely propagates scandal, rarely sows discord amongst her neighbours. She will be a better companion and helpmeet for thoughtful men, and a safer friend for thoughtless women. She will be equally fitted, as the case may be, to become the cheerful "old maid,"—the respected teacher of the children of others,—or the intelligent instructress of her own. She will escape the evils of ignorance and vacancy of mind, on the one hand, and on the other, the imputation of being learned over-much. No "blue stocking" was ever a thinking woman; ignorant of all that remains to be known, she prides herself upon the little that she knows; and incapable of understanding the humility which is inseparable from true knowledge, she forces upon others her petty and superficial attainments. The woman of reflection,

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moreover, will not contract her feminine sphere, by occupying a corner of it, and allowing the rest to be wasted ground, but she will never advance a step on the outside of the magic circle. No "emancipated woman"—to use a popular American phrase—was ever a woman of Thought; she emancipates herself, because she has not thought, or has thought to very little purpose, of the noble place, and the influential duties which God has given her,—nobler than the place of any man,—more blessed and angel-like than the duties of any other created being. She emancipates herself, by throwing aside the mighty power that is her own, and trying to grasp in vain, the intellectual strength, the unshackled freedom of her brother's position. She emancipates herself, in short, because she has not mind enough to enter into the mind of God.

Original thought in a woman, is likely to be crude and unprofitable; hence it requires a large infusion of the thoughts of others. Reading will therefore form a prominent part in the employments of those, who are aroused to a sense of the wonderful elements of work, which exist in the unseen regions of Thought. Some people—clever, active, and useful, in their own way—maintain that reading is a mere selfish indulgence, which takes up a great deal of time, and is of no use in practical life. Others are of opinion, that to fill the mind with other people's ideas, is a sort of mental plagiarism; thus a young

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man once remarked, that he was not reading much, for fear of hurting his eyes and his originality! To read aright, so as not on the one hand to interfere with the practical duties of life, and on the other, not to impair the individuality of the mind, it is necessary to read *with a purpose*. WHY do we read? If only to wile away the vacant hour, or to post through miles of paper, or to gain the credit of being "a great reader," our books may be consigned to the flames for all the good they do us. As the body requires nourishment, so does the mind, not taken at random, but regularly, and with consideration, so as to suit the mental diet to the mental constitution; and as the body without sustenance could not fulfil its appointed services, so the mind, if left unfed and unstrengthened, could not perform its varied and important work. Why then do we read? Let it be to fit us for thinking, for living, for working; let it be to honour Him, who having given us the magnificent palace of the mind, cannot be pleased when it is left unfurnished and untenanted, and consequently rendered by degrees useless and uninhabitable. But HOW do we read? If our reading is designed for anything better than "much talk and little knowledge," it is equally important and difficult to know how to read! more difficult than our early exploits in alphabet and spelling-book, for it requires patient and laborious mental operations, to meet the mere external one, of

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pouring in knowledge at eye and ear. A master of the subject says,—"Reading furnishes the mind only with materials of knowledge; it is thinking makes what we read ours. We are of the ruminating kind, and it is not enough to cram ourselves with a great load of collections; unless we chew them once again they will not give us strength and nourishment. . . . To which let me add, that this way of thinking on, and profiting by what we read, will be a clog and rub to any one only in the beginning; when custom and exercise have made it familiar, it will be despatched, in the most occasions, without resting or interruption in the course of our reading."*

Let us read, then, so as to increase, to elevate, to furnish thought. Let us read patiently,—not excitedly rushing through a book to know the end of it, or to begin another in haste, or to have the satisfaction of getting through so many volumes. Let us read systematically,—not adhering too pertinaciously to our own rule, and the rules of others, but modifying, altering, and increasing a judicious course of reading, according to our better acquaintance with our own mental wants and peculiarities. It is well not to despise the aid of notes and abstracts, so as to gather up fragments which might otherwise be lost to our memories,—to record our own impressions,—make our own reflections and illustrations, and thus

* Locke on the Conduct of the Understanding.

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prove our own progress. Let us strive against that besetting sin amongst us,—superficiality. If all were as candid as Hannah More's heroine, her confession would not be a very uncommon one.

> "I seiz'd on learning's superficial part,
> And title-page and index got by heart,
> Some learned authority I still would bring,
> To grace my talk, and prove—the plainest thing;
> This the chief transport I from science drew,
> That all might know how much Cleora knew."
>
> HANNAH MORE'S *Search after Happiness.*

If we read hastily, we shall think hastily, and thus we shall not only be scantily supplied with materials for the honey, but we shall be destitute of the skill, patience, and perseverance needful for forming the cells, and filling them with the precious store. But WHEN do we read? Although man's education is so much more thorough, and occupies so much longer time, yet it is not so decidedly pronounced to be "finished," as that of woman after eighteen years of masters and governesses, calisthenics and guitars. When a girl has gone through a good deal of what receives the name of reading, in London or Edinburgh, Bath or Brighton, she thinks that the time for it is past, and that, if she reads any more, it is only for the purposes of amusement or fashion; but if she is to be superior in future life to a faded belle or an elderly butterfly, reading, and its inseparable vocations of thinking and learning, if begun in childhood and youth, must not stop there, but must go

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on through middle life, to the days of old age. That was an ingenious as well as instructive device of Michael Angelo, which represented an old man in a go-cart, with an hour-glass upon it, and this inscription, "*Ancora imparo!* YET I AM LEARNING."

> "Were man to live coeval with the sun,
> The patriarch-pupil would be learning still;
> Yet dying, leave his lesson half unlearned.
> YOUNG.

The time of our daily readings must vary of course with circumstance; but when practicable, it should assume a stated place in the day's avocations, though it need not be rigidly confined to it, or smaller portions left neglected. "Secure the interstices of your time," said Robert Hall, "and you will be astonished to find how much reading you will get through in a year."

WHAT do we read? is also a question to be seriously asked, and seriously answered, in these days when female literature has such a wide field to wander in, of abridgments, reviews, magazines, serial novels, and ephemeral biographies,—not to be despised in their own time and place, but when filling the library, and forming the taste, they are found to unsettle and excite the mind, to produce a patch-work of thoughts and opinions, and to foster that indolent superficiality, which contents itself with gathering a few facts and external ideas. It would be good to ask ourselves in closing the en-

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grossing volume, what useful thoughts and elevated feelings it has left with us, and to what train of ideas it has opened the way: and whether it has left us satisfied with its own scanty share of information, or has sent us intelligent and thirsting inquirers to more extensive wells of knowledge.

To elevate reading and thinking, into their right, though rarely occupied place, they must go hand in hand with mental discipline, or "the power of mastering the mind." Without the habit of close attention, and of resolute self-control, the mind will wander from the page or from the teacher, into its favourite field of speculation, or will be absorbed in fancies and day-dreams; and though ever and anon returning to its occupation, it receives but a spasmodic attention, —the unity of the subject is utterly broken,—a false estimate of it is formed, and only a few of its bearings recognised. Dr. Abercrombie says, "The cultivation of a habit of steady and continuous attention, or of properly directing the mind to any subject which is before it, so as fully to contemplate its elements and relations, is necessary for the due exercise of every other mental process, and is the foundation of all improvement of character, both intellectual and moral. Nearly connected, and of equal importance, is a careful regulation and control of the succession of our thoughts. This remarkable faculty is very much under the influence of cultivation, and on the power to acquire it depends the important habit of

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regular and connected thinking. . . . It may not be going too far to assert that our constitution, in the scale both of moral and intellectual beings, is, in a great measure, determined by the control which we have acquired over the succession of our thoughts, and by the subjects on which they are habitually exercised."*

Fifty years ago there might have been more ground for hesitation than there is at present in a woman advocating to women, the advantages to be derived from mathematics, in mental training. Female geometricians were even then looked upon as criminal personages, in spite of Locke's declaration, that mathematics should be studied, "not so much to make mathematicians as reasonable creatures." Many more of the latter would there be, if such a study were a common and necessary element in all female education. If the study of other sciences may be supposed to distract and unfit the feminine mind from its peculiar province of thought and usefulness, the study of mathematics does not seem liable to the same objection, so practical is the turn of mind which it induces, so successful is the warfare which it wages with inattention, with superficial knowledge, with flighty and sentimental trains of thought. As there is no "royal," so there is no feminine road through the proposition and the theorem; the simplest demonstration requiring a

* Abercrombie on the Intellectual Powers.

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patient investigation and thorough comprehension, which will go far to cure woman of some of her prominent failings. Often contented to pick up half an idea, or a partial demonstration of truth, mathematics will teach her to grasp the whole in all its bearings. Often prone to exaggeration and incorrectness of thought and statement, mathematics will teach her to think before she jumps to a conclusion, and to cultivate precision of thought and of expression.

When a woman sets herself diligently to Thought Work, she must necessarily bestow on it much care, time, and trouble; but she will find her reward in the additional influence which it will give her at home and in society,—in the additional ease with which she will perform the rest of her work,—and in the satisfaction of turning to good account the mental powers which God has bestowed upon her. It is not impossible, however, that she may be called upon to make a more open use of the materials of thought which she has collected. The present days are different from those when Lady Mary Wortley Montague's mother burnt her daughter's best letters, because she considered it a blot in the family escutcheon, to have literary honours emblazoned thereon! Love of notoriety is no uncommon feeling in women, and we sometimes see it manifesting itself, by aspirations after the dubious career of female authorship. That fame to a woman is peculiarly

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unsatisfying, we have the authority of one of its most successful candidates:

"Fame! Fame! thou canst not be the stay
Unto the drooping reed,
The cool fresh fountain in the day
Of the soul's feverish need.
Away! to me, a woman, bring
Sweet waters from affection's spring."

MRS. HEMANS.

While another, almost equally successful, has called it "a royal mourning in purple for happiness."* When a woman of cultivated mind, therefore, finds her thoughts wandering in this direction, she had better pause and cross-examine her own feelings, hopes, and purposes, for "power to do good is the only true and lawful end of aspiring."† Apart from this, to write books will only place her in an anomalous and uncomfortable position. If, however, she has something to say for God,—words of experience, of knowledge, of encouragement, of pleasant, and not unprofitable amusement, let her say it boldly, yet with simplicity, and God speed her in her utterance. Let her eye be single, and her heart large and loving, and He for whose glory she writes, will preserve her from the wounds of discouragement, and from the dangers which often attend success. In however humble a field, she may thus be enabled to work for God; and she may be placed in many positions where the power of so employing herself, when other avenues of usefulness seem closed, may

* L. E. L. † Lord Bacon.

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be a great resource and happiness. This talent, however, in a woman, must be kept in subordination to her own peculiar duties, however homely;—the proof-sheet that prevents the dinner from being ordered,—the new idea or flowing stanza that usurps the place of the needle, or the account-book, are unsuitable elements in feminine work.

Although we have dwelt longer upon the intellectual phase of Thought Work, its moral culture is of course the more important, for out of the heart are the issues of life; and its thoughts are everywhere spoken of in Scripture, and everywhere recognised in experience, as possessing the most important agency over the whole inner man and outward conduct.

Of the close connexion between the thoughts and the tongue—that unruly fire, we have an illustration in the social experience of the Psalmist. "And if he come to see me, he speaketh vanity; his heart gathereth iniquity to itself; when he goeth abroad, he telleth it."* How often, alas! do we see the truth of this picture, not only in the more open forms of sinfulness, to which we may flatter ourselves that its meaning is limited, but in the friendly circle, the private boudoir,—wherever, in short, there are words and thoughts that are contrary to the command of Him whose thoughts are not as ours; "Judge not that ye be not judged." That was a safe determination of the

* Ps. xli. 6.

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old divine, "Whenever I spy a fault in a neighbour, I will be careful to think of two of my own." The vain and frivolous thought, how opposed to the dignity of the mind, to the welfare of the soul, for the "thought of foolishness is sin." The contemptuous thought, how displeasing to Him who feels no contempt, *even for us.*

> "Stranger! henceforth be warned; and know that pride,
> Howe'er disguised in its own majesty,
> Is littleness; that he who feels contempt
> For any living thing, hath faculties
> Which he has never used; that thought with him
> Is in its infancy."
>
> WORDSWORTH.

The self-righteous and complacent thought, how revolting to Him who can only dwell in the broken and contrite heart. The unbelieving thought, how dishonouring to Him who loves the trusting, unquestioning spirit of the little child.

That moral culture and regulation of the mind, therefore, which can only proceed from a changed heart, is a most important part of Thought Work. It will prompt all tender and gentle thoughts of, and for others; it will enable it to say with the Psalmist, "In the multitude of my thoughts within me, thy comforts delight my soul,"* and it will give a joyful and decided answer to that question which searches and tests all mental operations, "What think ye of CHRIST?"

* Ps. xciv. 19.

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With regard to Reading Work, let it be kept in mind, that the wisdom which is not drawn from the Book of the Lord, would be an arch without a key-stone, a world unsteady in its sphere. Knowledge, when separated from this, is but "wood, hay, and stubble." Knowledge that is united to it, is like a firm rock, that shall never be moved. The Bible, then, must be the beginning and the end, the companion and the aid to all other studies,—not only for the intellectual power of its diction,—the grace of its songs and lyrics,—the burning beauty of its prophetical strains,—but specially for that knowledge that alone "maketh wise unto salvation." That was a beautiful definition given by a converted heathen of true Scripture study, and the devotion to which it leads, "When I open my Bible," said he, "God talks with me, and when I put it down, I talk with God."

"In the temper of the invisible mind,
The God-like and undying intellect,
There are distinctions that will live in Heaven,
When time is a forgotten circumstance!
The elevated brow of kings will lose
The impress of regalia, and the slave
Will wear his immortality as free,
Beside the crystal waters; but the depth
Of glory in the attributes of God
Will measure the capacities of mind;
And as the angels differ, will the ken
Of gifted spirits glorify him more."

BRYANT.

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IX.

PROVING WORK.

"But let every man prove his own work."—GAL. vi. 4.

"Every man's work shall be made manifest: for the day shall declare it, because it shall be revealed by fire; and the fire shall try every man's work of what sort it is."—1 COR. iii. 13.

"Their glorious efforts, winged with heavenly hope,
Each rising morning sees still higher rise;
Each bounteous dawn its novelty presents,
To worth maturing, new thoughts, lustre, fame;
While Nature's circle, like a chariot wheel
Rolling *beneath* their elevated aims,
Makes their fair prospect fairer every hour,
Advancing virtue, in a lure to bliss;
Virtue, which Christian motives best inspire!
And bliss, which Christian schemes alone ensure!"

. . . . . .

"His God sustains him in his final hour:
His final hour brings glory to his God;
Man's glory Heaven vouchsafes to call her own.
We gaze; we weep; mixt tears of grief and joy!
Amazement strikes! Devotion bursts to flame!
Christians adore! and Infidels believe!"

YOUNG'S NIGHT THOUGHTS.

MUCH pleasanter would it be to let our work go unproved,—to allow the apple of bitter dust to continue fair and shining,—to fold complacently the petals of the rose-bud around the cankerworm,—to admire the column of flame shooting up from our heart-altars, without inquiring too minutely whether

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it be consecrated or "strange" fire. To do so, however, were to disobey God's distinct command to prove our *own* work. We are not to be the provers of other people's work,—a much easier and pleasanter proceeding, and by no means an unusual one; but each is to take self, that fair and dearly cherished object, and place it under the power of a mental microscope. Its thoughts, its utterances, and its actions, so long covered by a shining veil, are to be laid bare and scrutinized. "This work that I have done, how fair, how honoured of man, how accepted by God!" But is it so? Look again! and the man's inmost soul recoils with abhorrence,—he recognises not the work of his own hands through the microscopic lens. Full of cracks is the enamel, full of dross is the gold, full of flies is the sweet ointment.

The study of MOTIVE, so essential to that self-probation which is commanded by God, opens up a strange and melancholy page of our individual history. Let us commence in the morning, and keeping this great end in view, let us prove ourselves throughout the day, by searching and understanding the motive of every work, small as well as great. We have done a kind and self-denying action, and when it has not been recognised with prompt and flattering gratitude, our wounded feelings may perhaps divulge to ourselves another motive than the apparent one. We have spoken "honestly" to a

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friend, and told "painful truths;" but is there no lurking feeling of complacency at our freedom from the same fault,—no tinge of satisfaction at our friend's fallibility, to mar the purity of our Christian exhortations? We have done a deed of charity, and though we have not sounded a trumpet before us in the streets, yet have we not secretly rejoiced when others have done it for us? We have descanted on the general sinfulness of human nature, and on our own particular share of it; yet when others, however gently, have placed but a finger on the tender spot of our besetting faults, how we have shrunk and quivered! We have told a story, or repeated observations which implied self-compliment, and has it been to interest our auditors or to magnify ourselves? We have worked a work for God, which to admiring friends and to corroborating Self, appears to have His glory for its aim and object; but like the clear and muddy waters which we see flowing side by side in the same stream, the difference of which is not discernible in the distance, we find on closer inspection a dark and selfish motive beside the pure and heavenly.*

Motive is a test which can only be applied by God and by our own hearts, for no stranger can intermeddle with the bitterness or joy of its discoveries. It breaks up the outward religion that we think

* "Many actions, like the Rhone, have two sources, one pure the other impure." —GUESSES AT TRUTH.

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must be all right, because it is long since we have professed it, or because it is almost an hereditary possession. It rends and soils the fair robe we may wear before the world, sending us all black and unseemly to Him

> "Who knows all, yet loves us better than He knows."
> KEBLE.

It seems sometimes to be thought that work is the proof of motive, instead of motive being the proof of work,—that when we are engaged in a career of active and useful service, it must be all right with our souls;—and that there can be no reason to doubt the acceptability of our work in the sight of God. There was once, however, a fair and goodly vine; its tendrils clasped many a support, its leaves were green and spreading, its clusters were purpled with sunny ripeness; yet in the sight of the Vine-dresser it was useless and unfruitful. "Israel is an empty vine, he bringeth forth fruit unto himself; according to the multitude of his fruit he hath increased the altars, according to the goodness of his land they have made goodly images. Their heart is divided; now shall they be found faulty."—Hos. x. 1, 2. There may be emptiness, then, where there is apparent fertility and beauty. There may be unremitting and zealous employment, which is not accepted, because proceeding from a divided heart. There may be work for ourselves so pleasant, that while it is our meat and drink

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to do our own will, we forget altogether to do it as the will of our Father who is in heaven.

Few things are so utterly mortifying and discouraging as the study of our own work, and of the heart and mind that prompted it. Our own individuality, in all its selfishness and debasement of motive, is seen to cling fatally to our services, like the poisoned raiment. Self-righteousness, in all its Protean forms, discovers itself in every nook and corner,—not only in connexion with our righteousness and good works; but our very humility and convictions of sin, yea, even our confessions of self-righteousness, are turned into occasions for its display! When first aroused to consciousness of this self-confidence, this self-glorification, this earthly motive, in each varied aspect, we are apt to think that something new and hopeless has arisen in our hearts, forgetting that in the long years of our comfort and complacency, Self, though unseen, was as rampant and as fully developed, while, being unresisted, it was far more dangerous. It is something, however, even to know and see the real state of the case, and no longer to live at ease in a dwelling which we cannot discover to be full of lurking enemies, only because of its darkness and their dexterity. The first step towards the use of weapons of defence is a conviction of their necessity,—the first approach to the admission of light is the felt sense of being in darkness. If to this knowledge we add not only watchfulness but energetic endeavour to

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resist the usurpation of the evil motive, and heart-shame and sorrow for the long welcome and entertainment it has had, we may cheerfully hope and believe that this sin "shall not have dominion over us." It will be a good sign of our progress in this part of the work, when, instead of looking upon it as some great thing entitling us to credit and admiration, we restore it to its real place, as "reasonable service,"—as the offices of the servant who does what he is commanded, so natural, so needful, so destitute of any claim to merit, that when we have done all, we are constrained to say, "we are unprofitable servants, we have only done that which was our duty."* It will be useful, too, to cherish a conviction of the futility of those flattering, though sometimes honest judgments, passed upon our work by those around us, who can read neither heart nor motive.

Blessed indeed will it be when our work, increased and hallowed by purified motive, is but another name for increased love to God and man, both springing from the stem of a strong and vigorous faith, which, like a costly exotic, bears flowers, foliage, and fruit, at the same season. This faith that worketh by love, will produce a child-like simplicity of work, in which no doubts, no demurs, no unfilial questionings will find a place. A class of Sabbath-school children in the course of an examination upon the Lord's Prayer, were once asked how they thought the will of God

* Luke xvii. 7-10.

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was done in heaven. Various answers were given, and at last a little girl, the youngest of the class, rose and said, that she thought it must be done *without asking any questions!*

It may appear to some, that *Proving Work* is of comparatively small, or at all events only of personal interest and importance. Its result seems to be slight, for the amount of good done to others by unproved work is to all appearance equal, and the estimation in which it is held by the world is scarce affected by it. Selfish motives, however, can rarely be so skilfully hidden as not in some degree to mar our consistency, even in the world's eyes; while nothing will more surely destroy the happiness and cheerfulness of our services, than the mortification and wounded vanity, which is sure at times to buffet and paralyze all selfish work; whereas that which has a high and single motive will be like the stately vessel which sails triumphantly amidst blasts as well as breezes. Nor will the success, though apparently equal, be so in reality. The selfish motive may be rendered a useful instrument, like many things, persons, and events, in the history of society, which in themselves are evil, but it will never be a permanent and honoured agent of good;—its selfishness will be punished; and its results will be cast aside when they have lived their little day. Even temporary success is not always sure. Like the royal owners of the ships of Eziongaber, those whose industry is

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not of God, may have it said unto them, "The Lord hath broken thy works."*

It is well that we should be provers of our own work now, when its proof need not drive us to despair, —when we may hope to have the motive changed and the performance purified; for if we disdain to do so in this our appointed time for probation, the Lord will take the work into His own hands, and send His own awful instruments. Approaching death is one of these,—not to be denied,—not to be turned aside from its purpose,—but probing and proving to the very uttermost, the poor conscience-stricken, self-deceived, and deceiving labourer. Perhaps he has cherished the expectation that he is to be amongst the blessed who die in the Lord, because there are works, fair and flourishing, to "follow him" into the unseen world. But he is laid upon a bed of lingering sickness; or he is prostrated suddenly by pestilence; or he lies mangled and bleeding on the iron paths which intersect our land with danger and destruction. Hastily he summons to his aid the companions of his journey into eternity; but his works, where are they? One has vanished and left no wreck behind,—another is but a ghastly idol,—a third is burnt to ashes,—another has been weighed in the balance and found wanting: so he dishonours God by a frightened and despairing death; and if saved at all, he is saved as by fire.

* 2 Chron xx. 37.

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Proving Work, then, must ever have in view, and be preparatory to that awful time, when scrutiny is certain, by one means or other,—"for he only is wise who, while daily planning for time, is hourly planning for eternity." It has been said, "Esteem time as your most precious talent, which, when you bestow it upon any, you give them more than you can understand. A joint assistance of men and angels cannot restore it to you again."* We give too much time and labour to others, however, when we are thus led to forget that we have a work to do for ourselves,—even to prepare to meet our God. A poor child, nearly imbecile, who was a pupil in a Sabbath-school in Fife, sent a message on her death-bed to her teacher, "to teach a' the bairns how to dee!" Truly a necessary lesson, and a necessary work, not only for the purposes of the last closing scene, but for the work of life itself. Till we have learned, or are learning how to die, we shall never know how to live. Imperfectly will the mother—the governess—the pupil—the employer—the employed—the mistress—the servant—the Sabbath-school teacher, perform the difficult and intricate duties of their several life-spheres, unless they have learned to keep death ever in view, and the two worlds to which it is an entrance,—unless they have learned how to escape from the one, and how to guide to the other.

* Lady Brooke.

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Death is "a tremendous necessity,"—a law inseparable from all earthly created being. It came to the mammoth and the mastodon in their solitudes, lighted by the same stars on which we gaze,—and sepulchred them for the awe and instruction of future periods. It came to the first murdered,—to the first murderer,—and to the patriarch, who lived almost a millennium. It came to the Hun and to the Goth,—to the conqueror of worlds,—and to the trampled and tortured slave. It came to the Christian in the catacomb,—to the Red Cross knight in tented field or tournay,—and to the Emperor in his ermined purple. It comes now, as it came of old, to the mother and the child,—to the lover and the beloved,—to all that is instinct with the beauty and the joy of life.

In an old and rare volume by a female author, the subject is thus spoken of:—"The very thought of death disturbs one's reason. There are some so wise as neither to hate nor fear it; but for my part, I have an aversion to it, and with reason; for it is a rash, inconsiderate thing, that always comes before it is looked for; always comes unseasonably, parts friends, ruins beauty, laughs at youth, and draws a dark veil over all the pleasures of life. This dreadful evil is but the evil of a moment, and what we cannot by any means avoid; and it is that which makes it so terrible to me; for were it uncertain, hope might diminish some part of the fear; but

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when I think I must die, and that I may die every moment, and that too a thousand several ways, I am in such a fright as you cannot imagine."* Too terrible in its omnipresence to be forgotten, men have attempted to strip death of its horrors. The ancients sculptured a vase on the sarcophagus, and adorned the ghastly skull with living flowers. The Romans would not mention the fatal word, but intimated that their friends "had departed from life;" while, in the court of Morocco, it was a breach of etiquette to speak of "death," and it was only said, that the dead man "had fulfilled his destiny." The Greeks called the grave-yard "the sleeping-place,"—the Jews named it "the house of the living," and the Saxons, "God's acre."†

Death is not less dreadful to the worldling now,—not less busy amidst the proud and lofty, amidst the tender and cherished,—not less adorned by public pomp, plumed and sabled cortège, escutcheoned vault, and heraldic shield, as it has ever been; but it is not more familiar to men's thoughts,—it is not more wisely prepared for. While silver and gold are sought and heaped up, few invest the treasures which constitute readiness for death. While work of all kinds is to many a pleasure and a duty, Dying Work is thrust aside with alarm, as if it were to produce that death, which it only changes from a foe to a friend. Therefore it is that the end

* Lady Gethin.—See D'Israeli's Curiosities of Literature. † *Ibid.*

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of life so often contradicts the fair profession of the life itself, and that so many

"Deeply disappoint us by their deaths."

An old Christian once said, that he expected to find THREE WONDERS in Heaven. The first was, that many would be there whom he did not expect to see, —the second, that many would be absent whom he thought to have met there,—and the greatest wonder of all would be, to find himself there!

If there is any kind of work which may be evaded by some as out of their province, Dying Work belongs to the province of all; it must be begun early, never laid aside, and never completed till death is swallowed up in victory; and it must have the soul's salvation for its material and groundwork. A missionary in the East Indies being called to visit a native Christian's death-bed, inquired into the state of her feelings. She replied, "Happy! happy! I have Christ *here*," laying her hand on the Bible, "and Christ *here*," pressing it to her heart, "and Christ *there*," pointing upwards to Heaven.

Safety in death, however, is not all that is implied in Dying Work. The advice of the philosopher was "to familiarize ourselves early with death, for it is only dreadful to those who dread it." Familiarity with the thoughts, hopes, and changes which are attendant on death, will diminish the dread and shrinking sometimes manifested even by those whose

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safety is provided for. Habitually to realize that death, though attended by gentle tears and natural timidity, is stingless to those who have had its sting plucked out by grace, will rob the darkened chamber of the terrors, both of anticipation and reality, which too often reflect dishonour on the religion which we have professed to be capable of sustaining us in the time of utmost need. To be so prepared at any period of life, that we have nothing to do but to die, and so to die, as to bring glory to God, are the chief aims of Dying Work. It is not impossible for ambition to find its place even in anticipations of the last enemy;—and to glorify ourselves in a triumphant death, which will give interest and romance to our memories, is no uncommon desire; but we accustom ourselves too little to think of the last act of life, when all work for ourselves is over and done, as one of distinct service for God in declaring the glory and the strength of His rod and staff in the valley of the shadow of death,—and as one also of decided work for man, in shewing how the "spoiled can be strengthened against the strong,"*—how the hour of Nature's dismay can be changed into perfect peace,—how He who was dead is alive for evermore, to lead His people in the path which He knows so well. An aged man, called into the vineyard at the eleventh hour, was desirous of doing something for his Master, but his weakness and infirmity seemed

* Amos v. 9.

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insuperable barriers; at last he bethought him of setting aside a portion of time every day for special prayer, that in his death he might work for God by glorifying His name. His petitions were answered. Long and lingering and painful was his dismissal,—but he not only awaited it with patience and resignation,—he seemed to "swim in a sea of glory," as was said of another aged saint. All who looked on him felt that he was not alone in the swellings of Jordan;* and many who came doubtingly, went away adoringly, when they saw how a Christian could die. Death in such an aspect as this becomes changed and glorified. Instead of a terror to individuals,—instead of a world's wo,—instead of a grisly King of Terrors, it is transferred into a great social benefit. As the poet has beautifully sung,—

"Who would build temples without tombs in sight?
Who live without some dead man's benison?
Who seek truth, find good, or strive for right,
If looking up he saw not in the sun
The angel of the martyrs all day long,
Standing and waiting!"

. . . . . .

"Scant were the gardens if the graves were fewer."

ELIZABETH BARRET BROWNING.

We have spoken of death as one of the Lord's provers; but there is yet another, the latest and the most resistless. Death will not come to all. We know that there will be a generation who shall not die, but who shall be changed. But the Lord will

* Jer. xii. 5. Is. xliii. 2.

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come; and when the trumpet shall sound,—when the clouds shall sever,—when the dead shall arise, there must be an end of all unproved work. The dead man's work may be fearfully proved to himself and to God, and yet in the assemblies of earth it may take an honoured place,—but in the day when all flesh shall be at once in the presence of the Lord, it will be declared before God, and men, and angels. As nothing that defileth or that "maketh a lie" shall enter in through the gates into the city, so all deceptive worship, work, and motive, shall be cast out and have no part in that blessed place and period, when

> "In the desert shall arise
> Fruits of more than Paradise,
> And the earth again be trod,
> One great garden of her God!
> Till are dried the martyr's tears,
> Through a thousand glorious years."
>
> CROLY.

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X.

REST.

"Thus saith the Lord, The people found grace in the wilderness, even Israel, when I went to cause him to rest."—JER. xxxi. 2.

"For we which have believed do enter into rest. . . . There remaineth, therefore, a rest to the people of God."—HEB. iv. 3, 9.

"Oh princely lot! oh blissful art!
Even while by sense of change opprest,
Thus to forecast in heart,
Heaven's age of fearless rest."

"And I smiled to think God's greatness flowed around our incompleteness,
Round our restlessness His rest."

ELIZABETH BARRET BROWNING.

EVERYTHING around us has a capacity for rest as well as action. The stormy winds and restless waters can be calm as a slumbering infant. The shifting sands of the desert, in spite of their moving columns and scorching showers, are oftentimes awful in their quietude. The city, with its ceaseless hum and stir of voices and footsteps, lies hushed and restful in the quiet of every midnight. The railway, with its snorting engines, and crowded stations, and lightning speed, seems as if it knew no rest; yet a moment after the flying train, there is no sign of life or motion on the iron lines. There is a double capacity, however, in the Christian life; not restless at one time

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and calm at another,—not working first, and then taking rest; it is composed of united labour and repose. All men yearn for rest, from tumultuous strife, and cankering cares, and warring affections, and struggling memories, and distracting fears,—hence a false rest has often been sought and found, in convent and cave,—in the allurements of the world,—in the sluggish pause of indolence. Men also yearn for work without toil, for action without restlessness, but it is only the Christian who can combine these two apparently anomalous desires, Work and Rest.

Life is generally spoken of as a wilderness; a mode of expression not unwarranted by Scripture, and certainly not contradicted by experience, for there is much that assimilates life to a wilderness. Yet this gift of sweet and genuine rest is possessed by the pilgrim, even while journeying amidst its waste and desert places. To obtain it, he is not exempted from the dangers, difficulties, and discouragements of the way, nor surrounded by appliances of luxury and idleness. There, even there, *in* the wilderness, like Israel of old, he finds grace and rest. Yet when the Lord says to His disciple, "Come into this desert place and rest awhile," it is not for inactive indolence. No rest can be refreshing that is but another name for self-indulgence, and no work can be thoroughly successful that is not joined with a calm and resting spirit. Rest must be a treasure in possession as well as an inheritance to

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come, though to many this is a mental enigma. "We are very weary, both in mind and body," say working Christians; "we are exhausted by the force and the shock of the battle," say soldiers of the Cross; "our lives are bitter to us because of our afflictions," say the bereaved; "we are walking in darkness, and are wayworn and sad," say mourners in Zion; "the grasshopper is a burden," say the aged ones; "surely it is a sign that our souls are not right, because we do not find rest here, but are looking only for that which is to come; and how are we to recognise this blessing in times of hard work and heavy sorrow, unless we may stop the one, and have the other lightened?" Dear friends, it is true that, in one sense, there is no rest here for the sole of the Christian's foot; for like the dove that would not else have returned to the ark, we should never have sought what was better and more enduring. It is true that, as Baxter says, "If God allowed us to have rest on earth, we should be restless wretches through all eternity." Those, however, who believe *do* enter into rest, and, though faith may not be wanting, there must be a deficiency in its quality and degree, when we struggle without a quiet confidence,—when we sorrow without a calm and chastened spirit,—when we work and find no rest. Yes! there is rest even in this weary world,—there is repose even in the busiest hours of the vineyard. Is there no rest in the sense of the Saviour's love, and the pro-

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mise of His presence,—in the knowledge of His infinite power for our protection,—in the suitableness of all His dealings to the requirements of our souls and bodies? Has the little one no rest beside its mother? So may the Christian rest in the shadow of the wings that are even as those of the bird mother around her tremblers.* Has the son no confidence when his Father is at the helm? So may the Christian look up in the storm and have no fear. Has the pilgrim no repose when journeying from the waters of Marah he finds the wells of Elim? So may the Christian arise and depart from broken and polluted cisterns, and rest beside the waters of life with exceeding joy.

. . . "I hence appeal
To the dear Christian Church—that we may do
Our Father's business in these temples mirk,
Thus, swift and stedfast; thus, intent and strong;
While thus, apart from toil, our souls pursue
Some high, calm, spheric tune, and prove our work
The better for the sweetness of our song."

ELIZABETH BARRET BROWNING.

The pilgrim's rest, however, is not only in the wilderness; that weary pathway is trodden at length; the caravan passes its last post; and while behind stretches a long dismal waste, before, there is smiling verdure. No longer smitten by the simoom—menaced by the wild Arab—tortured by thirst—scorched by the eastern sun—pursued by the beasts of the desert,—the pilgrim's work is over and done; he toils, he travels, he combats no more for ever. He has

* Matt. xxiii. 37.

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entered the better country, he has found the continuing city, he has reached the beloved Home.

Work goes with us to the very portals of eternity; there is work for the sick, for the aged, for the dying, but

> "Death's mild curfew shall from work assoil;"

and then comes "the rest that remaineth;" still, indeed, endowed with the double capacity of which we have spoken, and taking the form of active rest, or resting action, but containing no toil, no weariness, no baffled yearning for repose. Every faculty of mind and heart will then know what it is to rest fully. Love, so often restless and severed in this world, will then enter into its quiet rest.

> "There we find the joy of loving,
> As we never loved before,
> Loving on unchilled, unhindered,
> Loving once and evermore."

Memory so painful, so smiting, so yearning here, will be full of rest in its rejoicing and grateful thoughts of all, that dark on earth, is radiant in heaven. Thought, so weary with its perplexities, its difficulties, its vain strivings, its imperfect comprehension, will then be free and unshackled, resting in its perfect knowledge. Hope so often fainting, subdued, and disappointed—so frequently but a hoping against hope, will then rest in full fruition. Benevolence, so limited in its possibilities, so laborious for apparently but a small result, so cast down when it realizes the woes which it cannot relieve and the wrongs which

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it cannot redress, will be freed from its burden of sympathy and responsibility, and will rejoice in the banishment of sorrow and oppression, from the place "when the wicked cease from troubling and the weary are at rest." The body, too, so worn with sickness, so faint with languor, so weary with fatigue, will have its repose, not only for a little while in the green "sleeping place," beside the quiet river, or under the drooping willow, or by ancient cross and oriel, but it will rise again to take an animated and blissful rest. United to the spirit, its old inmate and companion, to which it was formerly but a clog and a hinderance, it will enjoy a blessed and reposing eternity. And when thus "this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory. O Death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory? The sting of death is sin; and the strength of sin is the law. But thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory, through our Lord Jesus Christ. Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye stedfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord."—1 Cor. xv. 54-58.

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